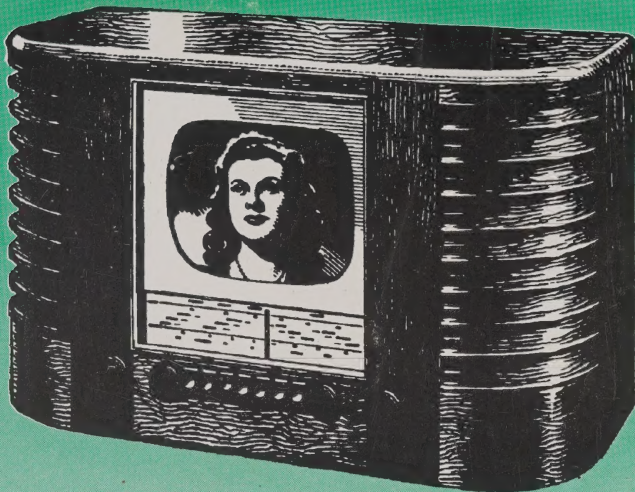


405 ALIVE

Recalling the Golden Years of Black & White Television



Technostalgia for the joy of it!

Issue 38 - Second Quarter 1998

ISSN 0969-8884

No cover price, because it's priceless (oh all right, £4 then)

**IN THE MAGAZINE WITH ABSOLUTELY
NOTHING NEW IN IT...**

High Definition Films Ltd part 2 SAVOY HILL 75 YEARS
Early Days of Colour Winky-Dink AP Recalled
THE START OF TELERECORDING Happy 60th Birthday, COAX Plug!
New books, products and CD-ROMs reviewed just for you
MORE TASTY SMALL ADS (and more rarities!)

... and much more

405 ALIVE

Founded 1989 by Andrew Emmerson, with title and inspiration by Bill Journeaux.

Issue 38, Second Quarter 1998

Patron: Roy Hudd

Editor: Andrew Emmerson
71 Falcutt Way, Northampton, NN2 8PH.
Tel: 07000-405625 Fax: 01604-821647.
e-mail: midshires@cix.co.uk

Publisher: The Radiophile,
Larkhill, Newport Road, Woodseaves, Stafford, ST20 0NP.
Subscriptions cost £16 inland and BFPO; £20 all other territories.

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Web page <http://www.petford.demon.co.uk/kaleidos/405aliv.htm>

ISSN: 0969-8884.

LEGAL WARNING, particularly for New Readers

By reading this magazine you are entering a Temporary Autonomous Zone (TAZ), where normal values, logic and timescales do not apply. At the least you may feel unable to put the magazine down until you have read it through to the very end. While you read it, you may also feel strangely mellow and entirely unable to face doing anything else useful for 24 hours. Alternatively you may sense a sudden urge to have money extracted painlessly by one of our advertisers. Anything may happen and at the very worst you may enter a Permanent Autonomous Zone (PAZ) of your own creation.



FROM THE EDITOR ...

This is a particularly full issue so this message will necessarily be brief. A huge pile of articles is being prepared for the next issue, so if your contribution has not appeared this time, be assured it will be in the next one. In addition I have just come upon an envelope full of articles first sent in five years ago (the shame of it!), so these will also go into the next issue!

Not for the first time this magazine appears later than we might have hoped, although we have never allowed ourselves to be bound by a rigid publication schedule. Nonetheless, we shall strive to bring out the next issue sooner rather than later, so please send in your letters, advertisements and articles as soon as possible to ensure their appearance. Thanks!

QUOTES ON TELEVISION

A simple explanation

Sir Stephen Tallents, BBC Public Relations Controller, gave this definition of television in a recent after-dinner speech:

"Excited by impulses borne on a carrier wave which vibrates 45,000,000 times a second, a spot of light $\frac{1}{32}$ inch in diameter, travelling at a rate of 6,000 miles an hour, and varying in its illumination up to four million times a second, traces 25 times a second in alternate lines, a page of 405 lines on the opposite and sensitised end of a cathode-ray tube. The sight and sound signals are synchronised to within one four-millionth of a second."

Wireless World, 17th November 1938

Just as FM radio didn't enable skilled musicians to compose good music and didn't make unskilled musicians any more talented, better picture quality won't magically transform television into something that doesn't insult the viewer's intelligence.

Tom Harrington, in *Wired* magazine.

The fissured ITV system divides up Britain not unlike the several warring kingdoms divided it in the early Dark Ages. Some say that the comparison need not stop there.

Melvyn Bragg, in *The Times*, 16th June 1997.

LETTERS, WE GET THE LIVELIEST LETTERS...

Many thanks to all our letter writers, including those few who didn't make it to this page. We try and fit in as many letters as possible, occasionally editing for space or clarity.

From Richard Logue:

The 'Paddy Clarke' testcard was used by the Irish broadcaster RTE between 1966 and 1972. The card was as far as I know, the only testcard ever designed for both 405 and 625 line transmissions since it had two sets of frequency gratings, one for each standard. The 625 line gratings were in the form of an exclamation mark to the right of the circle and the 405 line gratings were inside the centre circle. You can see the card for yourself on my Irish television gallery webpage at:

<http://www.users.zetnet.co.uk/rlogue/gallery.htm>

The Paddy Clarke card, so named after the RTE engineer who designed it, was superseded by the PM5544 testcard (known to most of you as Test Card G) in 1972. This was also transmitted on RTE's 405 line transmitters and the frequency gratings used to strobe quite mesmerisingly when I watched it on channel 7 from Kippure. The last time I saw it on 405 was in 1982 at my Grandmother's house in Donegal from the Moville channel 12 relay weeks before it was replaced by a 625 line service on channel H. It looked even worse then.

<http://www.users.zetnet.co.uk/rlogue/irishtv.html>

From Don McLean:

I've recently upgraded my website (<http://www.dfm.dircon.co.uk>) and included brand-new material that I've restored from discs owned by Jon Weller. Two of the new recordings are of one performance by what is almost certainly Betty Bolton. Having studied portraits of her, there is no doubt in my mind. I met her daughter a few evenings ago and she is 90-95 per cent sure it's her mother from the mannerisms. Given that recognition rate on 30 lines is even at best less than that, it is unlikely to be anyone else. We are now trying to converge on a date – it's one of thirteen and

we're engaging a lip-reader for the vision-only recording!

From George Windsor, by e-mail:

Firstly I would like to say that I enjoyed to the National Vintage Communications Fair at the NEC on Sunday 10th May.

- ❖ It was an excellent event, although a lot of stuff on sale there was over-priced and went back with the traders afterwards.

It was just a shame that they charged for parking especially at a relatively small event for the NEC on a Sunday.

- ❖ That's the bogey but all the staff who work there on a Sunday expect (and presumably get) double pay for giving up their Sunday! Car park fees help pay for this overhead. Blame the NEC, not the organiser!

I half expected to see a working 405 set but I guessed that it might have been forbidden due to possible safety hazards.

- ❖ I don't think the problem is safety, more likely the appallingly high cost of a mains feed (the charge is set by the NEC people, not by the organiser of the show). I was going to bring along a display myself on behalf of the Telecomms Heritage Group but it would have cost over £100 out of their or my own pocket, for zero return.

The main point of my e-mail is to ask if an article on a set restoration/resurrection with digitised photographs would be of interest in a future edition of *405 Alive*? I am considering performing a detailed restoration of my 1952 'ish Philips 12" console TV with photographs, what do you think?

- ❖ I'd be delighted!

>If so in what form you like the photos sent? Bit map?

- ❖ .PCX or .JPG will be fine.

I am thinking that if I forward everything in electronic form it might make your life easier, do you agree?

- ❖ Absolutely!

In passing, the Marconiphone 709 that you referred to in the last edition bought at the last NVCF is now owned and being restored by Tony Statham. I will ask him to send a progress report for inclusion in a future *405 Alive*.

From Steve Hale, by e-mail (smhale@waverider.co.uk):

Hi Andy, you may vaguely remember me, I purchased the 405 'Beulah 800' camera from you at the BATC rally this year. Well the good news is that it is now working! It needed a little TLC as you suggested. Achieving this has filled me with great inspiration. If you don't mind, can I pick your brains?

I'm monitoring the pictures on a 'Ferguson Junior 16' portable, model 3649, any idea of its age or worth? [Ideas anyone?] I've been trying to generate some interest with 405-line amateur TV over the airwaves in the Midlands area; luckily I think I may have found an interested party, but he's short on equipment too! I will be subscribing to *405 Alive*, thanks for your help and inspiration.

From Andrew Howlett, Dukinfield:

Nothing much to do with 405, just a good moan about modern telly. After looking forward to BBC1's *Invasion Earth*, I find myself disappointed and annoyed by this inept production. The title suggested a raw nightmarish drama, something like Quatermass, but what we got was a patchy, sloppy and sometimes rushed production which would have been more at home on satellite TV. Also, the BBC had obviously allowed their American co-producers to persuade them to shoot most scenes without the aid of studio lights. In real life, do we sit around in dark offices with just a single reading lamp throwing moody shadows across the wall? Finally, what was wrong with the video? If I want to watch dim, soft pictures I only have to tune to any episode of *Babylon 5* or *Deep Space 9*, but at least these programmes have the excuse of being originated in 525 lines and converted to 625, (although I've never understood why standards conversion should make the video look dim).

I find myself wondering if these effects were deliberate, in order to make the programme look 'American'? Or perhaps the latest generation of video engineers, who have maybe spent too much time staring at MPEG 'computer' images, don't know a good picture when they see one? Are we being prepared for digital TV? I think we should be told what is going on. Any takers? Sorry about the rant, but it upsets me to see our crisp television system degraded in this way.

From a long-established contributor (name and address supplied):

I recently received my copy of issue 37 and was appalled to read a communication from a Mr Hamer of Derby. Surely, the pages of *405 Alive* are not to be used as a vehicle for Mr Hamer's attempts at rubbishing a rival group of enthusiasts? If Mr Hamer wishes to correct errors made by other people which have appeared in *405 Alive*, surely he should do so in a non-judgemental fashion? Just

correcting the errors and not try to rubbish the unfortunate individual that has fallen into sin!

Mr Hamer seems to be concerned with two issues: Test Card D and Carole Hersee's left- (or right-) handedness. Firstly, Test Card D. Mr Hamer is in error when he states so emphatically that Test Card D was transmitted from April 1964. Test Cards D and E were hoped to be ready for 1st January 1964, so that Test Card F could be used for Engineering and Trade Test transmissions on BBC 2 from Monday 5th January 1964. Unfortunately, due to a delay in the production of the frequency gratings for Test Card E, neither card was radiated until Monday 5th May 1964. The start date for Test Card D was, by mutual agreement between the ITA and BBC, put back to 5th May 1964, so that both Test Card D and Test Card E could be introduced on the same day. Announcement slides were prepared, and radiated during the Trade Test periods, immediately prior to the introduction of Test Card D, so that the television trade would be prepared for the new arrival!

Why do people think that Test Card D was short lived? It beats me, boss! Test Card E was very short lived indeed due to unforeseen problems. The same problems resulted in D being revised. E was not revised owing to the expense, which was considered unnecessary as a colour card was already 'in the works'. Here is a case of confusion, or perhaps a typing error! E was short lived, but D ran from 5th May 1964 to November 1969! From the 2nd December 1967 BBC1 went over to exclusive use of the adjusted Test Card D, (the modified version with the two dots).

However, research shows that Channel Television used the modified D from 15th November 1967; and, due to the closeness of the start date, some ITV transmitters used the new D prior to 2nd December 1967, as it was considered an unnecessary expense to procure new copies of the old D for a few weeks' use only. All that can be said is that on the 2nd December 1967 all transmitters not using the new D prior to that date went over to using the new D from that date. No announcement slides were made up for this changeover as it was considered not to be worthwhile given that the changes were of a minimal nature. All engineering information sheets etc. were amended to the new specification, and the new sheets issued from 2nd December 1967. I hope readers will find this clarification helpful.

Secondly, is Carole Hersee (as was) left-handed? I can understand people inferring that Carole was left-handed, because of an interview given by Mr George Hersee (BBC staff, retired). In this interview Mr Hersee explains how the picture of Carole and doll and blackboard and so on came about. At the explanation's end, Mr Hersee related that one of the committee members pointed out that Carole was holding the piece of chalk in her left hand, to which Mr Hersee had replied, no problem we'll just reverse the transparency.

Mr Hersee didn't say his daughter was left-handed; but, if you infer that Carole would not be asked to do something not natural for her, i.e. assume she has the chalk in her left hand because that was natural for her, then it is easy to infer left-handedness. Based on the only information available, and being unable to get to a reliable source of information closer to the matter in hand, it is not an unreasonable inference, but that doesn't make it right. If you are going to publish an opinion on any matter, about which you have any doubt, it is always advisable to publish a disclaimer along with it.

I hope this clarification is of help to readers who may be interested in this obscure subject matter. There is a right way of drawing readers' attention to inaccurate information published in *405 Alive*, or any other publication for that matter, and I hope I have done so correctly on this occasion. I also trust that we never again see a letter such as that from Mr Hamer in issue 37 of *405 Alive*. Quite frankly I thought it was disgusting, especially as Mr Hamer's own information was just about as duff as the duff information he was wanting to correct!

Finally, I wish to make clear that I subscribe to *405 Alive* and the Robert Farnon Society, and to no other club or publication related to television engineering or similar fields. And I hope that no further opportunity will be given to anyone with an (apparent) axe to grind for grinding it in the pages of *405 Alive*. I merely offer this contribution to enhance the good name and reputation of this wonderful publication.

❖ This writer makes some valid points, particularly on professional etiquette. We don't censor or re-write letters but whilst readers are free to express their views in these columns, it would be nicer if these were not be at the expense of others. Some of the issues in this letter also illustrate the conflict that can arise where the official records vary from what actually happen; the archives say one thing, those who were there say something else!

From Roger Bunney, Romsey:

I write following '405 Alive' thudding once more onto the floor.

Page 12 issue 37: In my earlier career I worked for 18 months with DER TV Rentals circa 1963-4 and this company used mainly Thorn-sourced sets, though with a few Philcos and more elderly Fergusons/HMVs. Most of the new valved single- and then dual-standard sets that in 1963 were just appearing were made at the Gosport factory. Most delivered into the Southampton/Salisbury area were UHF tuner-less though very occasionally the odd receiver would appear with a UHF tuner included. These receivers could be easily modified for 625-line VHF working and were therefore ideal for TV-DXing during workshop hours! I left the servicing trade as

the 850 chassis was being phased out. However, relating to Keith Rann's letter and the (I suspect Andy Emmerson) footnote — all receivers delivered out of Gosport always had fully-tuned turrets (that is with 13 biscuits fitted) and normally with adjacent channel biscuits paired for a given area, i.e. in central South you'd have paired 3 and 11 for Rowridge and Chillerton etc. Most of the tuners were of American origin though the name escapes me (*was it Oak perhaps?*), using valves such as PC97 and PCF805.

Kippure ch.B7 RTE Dublin was receivable in Romsey, Hants, at least at my parents' house, as the land was sloping away to the NW and it would be at noise level +, fluttering up out of noise; the 625-line ch. H Kippure transmitter was more difficult due to our local Chillerton on B11. Aerials in use were two early Jaybeams WB6 models as a wideband Band III system.

And in reference to page 26 of the same issue and the series of Southern programmes recently discovered. *Runaround* — known to the crew as *Runaground* — initially started with Leslie Crowther, a popular kids' TV presenter but later series were fronted by others, eventually settling on Mike Reid. Leslie was a clean-cut, polite and 'proper' presenter whereas Mike Reid was rather more 'down to earth' and it was felt that he related to and was acceptable more to the kids. I also recall Metal Mickey that appeared often on the Saturday AM *Banana Shows*, rather a nightmare to rig for sound, metal cylinders with radio mics aren't good news. Metal Mickey went on to greater things, thank goodness. Noting the *Seaside Specials*, TVS continued with EFP [electronic field production] mixed into a Bournemouth International Centre seaside programme, the EFP being shot on the beaches and other touristy parts of the coast around Bournemouth. This was next edited into a stage show that was rigged/rehearsed on the Saturday, recorded on the Sunday and a late de-rig. The show was then vision edited, sound-dubbed and transmitted the following Saturday. One show to look out for, however, ex-Southern is the *End of the Pier Show*, a mega extravaganza for the mid-70s, lavishly shot and directed by Brian Izzard (a real showbiz director) and it involved using Shanklin, Isle of Wight pier. The pier collapsed into the sea in the great storm of 1986 (or was it 87?).

And finally backtracking to Mark Oldridge's letter on page 7. The Radio and TV museum in Paris. Charles Rafarel, who penned the TV DX column in *Practical Television* from mid-1963 through to his untimely death in 1971, presented his 30-line mechanical scanning receiver to this museum; the receiver had worked successfully since the early 1930s and he had received the BBC in Leeds in 1933, perhaps the first reported UK TV-DX at 300 miles. Charlie was very interested in France, being of French descent, and would have retired there but for his death. I can dig out further

information on this presentation as I retained his old logbooks and a few cuttings. If any further information is needed let me know.

Just out of interest, though not 405 lines, for my current TV-DXing and satellite reception I still use four 12" mono Ferguson portables type 3845 — in 20 years use I have had just one single fault, a tuner went low gain! These TVs were produced at the Gosport factory. The one problem that will occur is that the CRTs are slowly ageing; they use the Mullard A31—510W. I'd like to continue use of these receivers (why throw them away?) and if any trade readers know if this type of tube is still available, I'd appreciate any info. Incidentally these receivers replaced the earlier Bush receiver type TV62, the classic Bakelite 14" of which I had four in mint condition, and an unmarked TV63, the 'de luxe' wooden cabinet version. Faults that occurred were relatively few, the boost capacitor — a 0.1uF @ 500V wkg, a waxy TCC — would go short circuit and the PY81 would glow like the Eddystone light. This went to deck via 12-ohm resistor. If you've got a TV62, put a 1kV working in now. Arcing on some LOPTs was caused by the wax impregnation slowly forming a stalagmite and arcing to the paxolin base which by then would be yukky grease and dust. *Do not* attempt to break the stalagmite bridge but carefully heat a small tweezer and laying it on the paxolin, *melt* a gap back. A nasty hum once was caused by conduction across the PCL83 valve base, a split paxolin and riveted thing; replace with a porcelain one as it runs hot.

From Gareth Randall (on the Internet):

There have been a couple of interesting articles in the BBC staff newspaper Ariel recently which should be of at least passing interest. The most interesting was a double-page spread on the BBC archives, and the ongoing programme of recovery and restoration. Yet again, the concept of making the archives accessible to the public on an on-demand pay-per-view (PPV) basis was mooted. Apparently the Beeb still has some 12,000 hours of material on 2-inch and 1-inch tape to be viewed and transferred, a process which, given current staffing levels and resources, is expected to be completed within 10 years. Coincidentally, BBC Engineering estimates that it has about 10 years' worth of spares for the necessary VT machines!

The downside, however, is that the internal market ensures that it is apparently cheaper to conduct archive research at virtually any commercial library than within the BBC's own. It's well-known Birtist practice that the first step towards slimming down or abolishing a resource is to whack its price up and thus stifle usage, and in the reference, news clippings and sound/music archives it's BBC policy to actually destroy material... wonder if presentation material is on the 'destroy' list for TV and radio?

From Andy Howlett, Dukinfield:

I've just been thinking. In about 1967/68, we took the plunge and bought a telly which could receive BBC2. One of the programmes I remember watching was *The Andy Williams Show*, an import from the USA, and the BBC announcer always warned us that there would be a slight reduction in picture size. There was indeed a black border around the picture, obviously something to do with the conversion from 525/60 to 625/50, but why? What technique of conversion led to this effect?

Here's another question which I'm sure a BBC engineer can answer. I'm a radio amateur, and as I own a few items of test equipment (synthesised sig gen, frequency counter etc), I would like to phase lock it all to a known, accurate standard. A couple of years ago I designed and built a circuit which isolated the line sync pulses from an off-air television signal and used a phase locked loop to pull a 10MHz crystal oscillator, to which my test equipment was then synchronised. My question is this: How accurate is the 15.625kHz timebase at the BBC? During my investigations, I detected a small difference between the Beeb and Channel five, something of the order of 0.04Hz. Scandalous!

Finally, if anyone out there is looking for a spot of fifties-style interlude music, I can recommend *Bianca*, from the soundtrack of the film *Kiss Me, Kate*. It's just right! Incidentally, the production notes are fascinating. Apparently, parts of the original stereo master tapes had become unusable with age, necessitating the use of material from other sources, mainly the mono soundtrack album of the fifties. The changes from stereo to mono (often during a number) are undetectable unless you listen carefully using headphones, and the matching of sound quality and speed is faultless. Good tunes too. The CD is **Kiss Me, Kate - Original Motion Picture Soundtrack** on EMI.

From our Theatre Correspondent, Dicky Howett:

I usually scour bookshops as a matter of habit. Oft, the telly items I find are the usual rarities. Last month I had a useful memory jog and a case of serendipity. I found in a cardboard box at the back of a second-hand bookshop a few theatre programmes. Now, I'm not much in the habit of theatre programme collecting. This time it was different. One of the theatre programme was from 1939 and it was of *Me and My Girl*. This production, starring Lupino Lane, was an habitual venue for BBCtv outside broadcasts of the pre-war period. Another programme was from a 1953 pantomime - *Cinderella* - at the London Palladium. As a child I attended one of the performances and had, prior to finding the programme, only faint memories of the show. I did recall (correctly) some of the cast. They were Jon Pertwee, Max Bygraves, and Julie Andrews but of the rest of the cast I had no memory. Seeing again after 44 years the very

programme was a thrill and a revelation. I had forgotten entirely that Richard Hearne (Mr Pastry) was in the show. He was a favourite of mine on television. The other person who I had no memory of was Prince Charming herself, none other than Miss Magic Rays Of Light, Adele Dixon!

From Peter Smith G4JNU, Caversham:

I was interested to read that David Boynes is intending to construct a 625-to-30 lines converter. I built one in 1989 to demonstrate my replica televisor and to produce 30-line material for other users of 30-line equipment. I would suggest that David might like to contact the NBTVA (address at back of this and every issue) as their members have been constructing low-definition receivers, both mechanical and electronic, for many years and have considerable experience in this field. The club also has available a kit for a waveform generator to provide pulse and bar, greyscale and chequerboard signals to the Baird standard.

Incidentally, Baird did not transmit frame sync pulses but the picture signal was reduced to zero at the start of each line and this absence of picture signal used to give a measure of sync. I am very pleased to hear of another enthusiast and I hope this information will be of use.

Thanks for another action-packed *405 Alive* – please keep up the good work!

From Chris Worrow, Bury St Edmunds:

Just a quick fax to say I heard of a man in Sussex with a Perdio Portarama for sale. I gave him a call and myself and a friend drove down the weekend before last. Nice man, he and his wife made us very welcome and I am now the owner of the Portarama. I gave £75 for it but it is as new and has all the leads and a workshop manual; bar a slight fault on the frame output (dried up capacitor), it works very well.

From Ray Herbert, Sanderstead:

The editorial comment on page 7 of issue 37 regarding pen-names, reminded me that I made a list some time ago of other well-known authors who sheltered under nom de plumes. Included were:

H.J. BARTON CHAPPLE. A prolific writer who contributed to many magazines and author of several books on television. He was also known as John Wiseman and William J Richardson.

A.F. BIRCH. An employee of the Baird Company in 1928 and the first television announcer-presenter. Some of his articles for the magazine *Television* were written under the name of Norman J Nicolson.

T.H. BRIDGEWATER. Former chief engineer of BBC television and a respected television historian. His contributions to the technical press covered 62 years and articles by J. McPherson, R. Robinson, R. Congreve, Thornton Howard, J. Beardsall and J.M. Bartlett, were all from his pen.

J.J. DENTON. First hon. sec. of the Royal Television Society and a lecturer at Morley College for over 40 years. He assisted J.L. Baird as a voluntary helper at Hastings in 1923 and later played a prominent part in the transatlantic and colour television demonstrations in 1928. A modest man, he covered his tracks by writing as J. Darbyshire Monteath.

From Ray Herbert, again:
How about this?

TELEVISION RECORDS

I have previously tried television gramophone records, but without obtaining really good reproduction. A few days ago, however, ago I was privileged to see a private demonstration of home-made television records reproduced on a cathode-ray tube. The records had been made on a home-made film transmitter using a mechanical scanner, details of which I cannot divulge. All I can say is that I was astounded with the clarity of the picture as reproduced from the record. The amplifier and time base Used with the cathode-ray tube were of normal type, and I gather that the same record can be used for a large number of times before distortion becomes troublesome. There was slight flicker, but the picture was much better than that previously obtained when using a scanning disc or mirror drum on the 30-line transmissions put out by the BBC. I wonder if there might be a future for this kind of thing, for it should not be difficult to synchronise sound and vision records, which could be reproduced together.

Notes from the Test Bench,
Wireless World 26th September 1936

I have never heard of the above before. 405 lines on gramophone records must be impossible. But can anyone throw any light on this?

From Bob Netherway, Bristol:

This past Sunday (10th May) I was glad that *405 Alive* had arrived in time for me to read the full-page ad for the National Vintage Radio Fair held at the NEC in Birmingham. We spent a lovely day out there enjoying the atmosphere and the high quality of this event. I came away with a Bush TR82, which I have always wanted since a child, and a book by Boris Townsend about the N.T.S.C. system as it was in 1961, similar to the BBC book that I am still looking for. Now all I have to do is wait for the next edition of *405 Alive*!

From Philip M. Reynolds (seen on the Internet):

During my recent short stay in Yeovil, I visited the TV and Radio Museum at Montacute. The museum, behind the Post Office in South Street, is well worth a visit. It contains literally hundreds of interesting items dating back over sixty years. Shop-window layouts are used for some of the small items. The upstairs room houses mainly older radios, a PA system used in 1945, at least one radiogram pre-dating LPs and one TV. The long downstairs section has rooms full of radios and radiograms, many of them dated and marked with the original purchase price. One section is completely filled with TV sets, bearing such names as Bush, Ferguson, Ekco and Defiant, all of them 405-line only. Perched high up in this room is a 625-line Ultra portable. One of the shop-windows has a Decca dual standard 24" set behind it, and another has a Sony colour portable. At the front end among wartime radios, a sound system plays recordings of historic broadcasts. I would recommend the museum to anyone interested in old receivers.

From George Windsor, by e-mail:

I have a complaint to make. As you are no doubt aware a new copy of *405 Alive* can't be put down until read from cover to cover. The problem is that I can't read *405 Alive* while having my breakfast/lunch/dinner due to the pages not falling open at the required place without holding it underneath my plate. This is inconvenient as it end up with various bits of food matter and splashes.

Can you change it to the format of the *Radiophile*? It would also be large enough to carry more reading matter and last longer than one day.

❖ This just shows you can't please all the people all of the time! But pay me a salary for editing the magazine and I'd be delighted to make it twenty times as thick, in whichever format you choose!

From Jeff Vilencia, California (by e-mail):

I love kinescopes! Most of my 16mm kinescope collection is now in the hands of THE UCLA FILM & TELEVISION ARCHIVES in Los

Angeles California! Many of the interesting items I have made 3/4-inch videocassette telecine masters of for sharing with others! For example I discovered an episode of a live drama starring the now teen idol; the late James Dean from 1954! Also, Early Los Angeles Television 1947/48. *Armchair Detective* – I have an early sci-fi *Tales Of Tomorrow* ABC, 1952.

An interesting note, here in Los Angeles in 1947/49/49/50, the KTLA, channel 5, recorded all of their live video broadcast on 35mm film kinescopes, opposed to 16mm. So the few examples that survive are outstanding! Sometime in the mid 1960s when the station changed hands, the new owners took ten thousand 35 and 16mm kinescopes and destroyed them! Idiots! So a handful of examples now exist! I have about six of them! (four now at UCLA).

Pre-war is hard to find around here; there are some kinescopes of the 1939 World's Fair with FDR speaking over live television! And I have seen stills of 1929 live broadcasts from New York and the Bell Labs. (opera singer).

Another sad tale of kinescope death... the second station to open operation here in Los Angeles 1949 was KTTV. Sometime in the 1960s when they were going to re-model the building; as the story goes: there was a small Olympic-style swimming pool in the basement of the building. So they took ten years of cans of film kinescopes and stacked them or lined them up in the empty pool, then filled it in cement! Can you believe that?

Well there you go. I was lucky as a teenager in that I knew people in Hollywood who worked in film television exchanges, and they would give me kinescopes when they found them in the storage parts of the building. So at one time I had a garage full of 16mm TV shows, filmed and kinescoped! When they became rare, I had the good sense to turn them over to UCLA university that is trying to preserve these television films!

Also in the 1970's, again when I was a teenager, you could drive around the alleys of Hollywood on trash day, and pull out all kinds of cool films from the trash! And sometimes you would find the edited rolls of magnetic tracks from shows that would be thrown out after they made a master mix, and the "track fill" used in cutting the sound together was often old TV shows, so I would pull those parts out, and restore the show! many times I would get a complete kinescope with just a few splices –200 feet here, 400 feet there, another 400 feet, and there you have it, 1000 or 1200 feet, you got a half-hour show!

One time back in the 1970s a film lab closed its doors, and in those days (and until the big earthquake in 1995), all of the film labs kept the customers' negatives and track elements in their vaults! This lab was called Acme Film Lab, and they sent letters out to all of the producers who had holdings in their vaults! Their vault went back to the late 1930s. Well, I was called in by one producer who asked me to go there for him and pull his cans of film! When I

got there, thinking that all I would have to do was go to a file, look up the rack, pull the cans and I'm out of there. But, the bank who took over the assets, took all of the film and piled 100 thousand cans in small pyramid stacks in a large warehouse. And get this; they threw out the card catalog file!

So there I was amid stacks and stacks of cans of film. It seemed hopeless, but I did indeed find his films. And while looking through the stacks, I saw complete series of early television kinescope negatives, like first seasons of *Hollywood Squares* game show, stuff like that! It was amazing; I asked them what was going to happen to the films if the producers don't come to pick it up, and they said it would all be destroyed! Furthermore, they had only been in contact with a handful of producers. Over 50 per cent never responded to their call!

After the 95 earthquake, one lab was forced to remove about 50 thousand cans, back to their owners. One guy, who was a producer of shorts, like *How to brush your teeth*, odd stuff like that, had about a thousand of his originals there, his entire life's work (30 years). Well he had died, and they contacted his family and asked them, would they like to come and get his work (his lifetime film work), and they said, "No, throw it away, thank you!" So there it was, stacked up waiting for the trash men; I took a few cans of some prints he never picked up from the 70s about sailing, it was cool!

People here in America are not very smart, and they don't care about the past! That's why, and I say this in all honesty, Hollywood, the city itself; is a ghetto, it is falling apart, and you wouldn't believe it if you could see it! I have a ton of stories about Hollywood, I could go on and on!

❖ As for your tales about films locked away in vaults, it's the same story here. Some years back I was looking for prints of 1950s and 1960s commercials and I heard these were all stored in vaults at Pine wood Studios (our equivalent of Hollywood). Yes, they confirmed, they had these negatives but could release them only to the original advertising agencies. I asked what would happen if the agencies no longer existed, and they replied the negs would fester until one day they would have a purge and destroy the lot!

From Phil Taylor, 3 Silver Lane, Billingshurst, Sussex RH14 9RP:

Any time now I'm getting some MW31/74 (12KP4) CRTs from Switzerland. There are only two of the 9-inch MW ones and having had a couple of queries already after the last mention, I think these will go quickly. Could I have a mention in the next 405 please?

❖ Certainly not. Your 'letter' sounds more like blatant advertising.

PS: I bought your television book at Harpenden – are you selling these direct?

- ❖ Several people have asked me that and the answer is no. But the publishers, Shire Publications (address on rear cover of the album), offer a good trade discount so long as you take a minimum quantity of them.

From George Windsor, by e-mail:

I was fortunate enough to buy at a local Car Boot sale recently two now out of production ITC pre-recorded VHS double cassettes of *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1955) starring Richard Greene and *William Tell* (1957) starring Conrad Phillips. What nostalgia! It was great seeing some of the episodes again (six on each tape) after all these years. Some of the things that struck me after watching these were:

- (i) They seemed as good as I remembered them to be and are just as entertaining now;
- (ii) They were very well made for their time;
- (iii) They provided good wholesome entertainment, something severely lacking in today's entertainment world of swearing and shot moral standards.

You have to ask yourself, didn't they represent a better age?

This also made me think about why we 405 Alivers have so much interest in old television. True enough, the technology used is interesting in its own right, but it also takes us back to a better period in home entertainment when we as a country could produce good programmes.

What have we got now? Is there anything remotely like the quality we had? We now have to put up with nonsense most of the time from too many channel sources – just look at what has become of the BBC, how the mighty have fallen, it has become a poor facsimile of its former self. Thankfully I *can* remember what British Television was like in its heyday. As the singer Melanie put it: 'You don't know what you've got till it's gone' ...and the old saying: 'The good times have come, and they have gone' comes to mind.

From Bernard King, Hampton:

Hey, bud! What's wid dis KAYLEE bit on page 19 (issue 37)? And now in English: I say, old chap, there seems to be a slight error in the spelling of the trade mark thingy.

To put the record straight I send you — with compliments — evidence of the correct spelling. I don't know one old TV set from another let alone what goes into them, but bygone movie projectors are my province.



LEFT: Trade mark from 1910 to autumn 1943.

RIGHT: After the merger with G-B Equipments Ltd., in late 1943, the trademark looked thus. Legend has it that the word **KALEE** was derived from the maker's name; **A. Kershaw Ltd., Leeds** — with a bit of juggling.

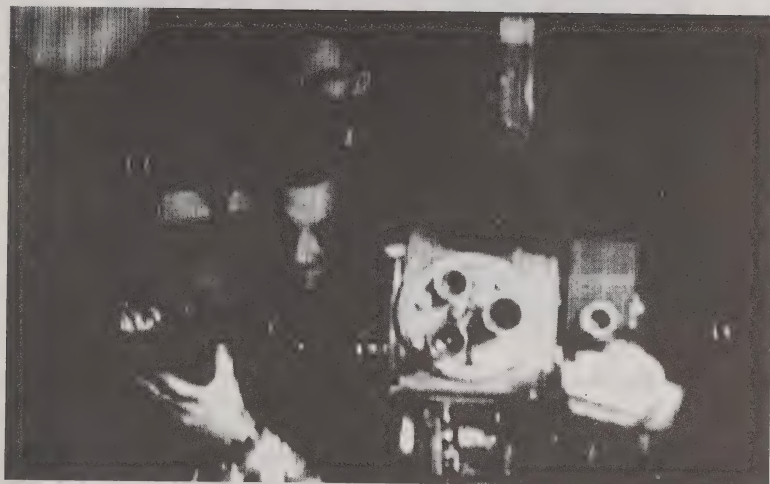
Whilst in the RAF (1942-46) I moonlighted a considerable number of evening hours at RAF cinemas. At Hawarden, near Chester, we had brand-new 1937 Kalee 12 machines and, in '46, at Watnall, Notts., we were lucky to have a couple of really vintage pieces; two pre-1925 Kalee 7 machines. From 1985 to c.1992, I had a Kalee 8 (of 1926) here at Hampton but the arrival of a second Debie D16 sound machine caused a big space problem. Regretfully the Kalee 8 had to go.

Baird Television used Kalee equipment in its early experiments (with British Acoustic Film sound heads; BAF was a Gaumont associated company) and photos show the usual oval plate trade mark on the top spool box except that the word reads **BAIRD**. Ray Herbert has a picture of one in a Pitman book I gave him. Come to think about it, it is the Barton Chapple book on which my model of the Televisor is standing in your **Old Television** book.

From Jim Pople, Olney, Bucks.:

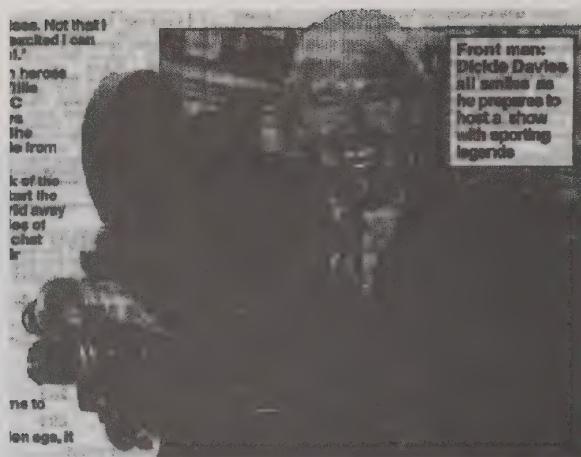
Continuing the great *Auricon* debate, the photographs were taken "off tube" at the time of a press conference for the engagement of Grace Kelly to Prince Rainier of Monaco and at a time when Auricons were in their heyday.

The one seems to have even a 1600ft. magazine and an electronic viewfinder, but what is the short fat magazine? Was there a double band version with perhaps magnetic sound? The 35mm camera is probably a Wall with combined optical sound — Dicky Howett, I am sure, can tell us.



Sorry, these are very dark pictures...





... and the print on the other side of the newspaper cutting shows up all too clearly here.

Finally, why was Dickie Davies shot in front of an old Auricon to publicise a new series beginning in March this year?

An illustrated letter from **Mark Brailsford** has been held over for full treatment in the next issue.

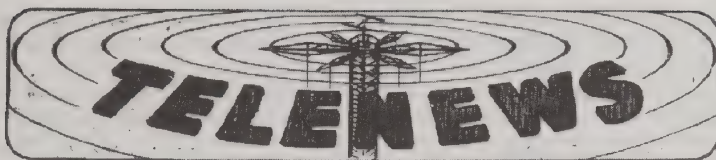
FIVE YEARS AGO

THE most famous Black Country voice ever heard on TV has been lost, it was revealed yesterday. The catchphrase 'Oi'll give it foive!' made teenage pop fan Janice Nicholls a star in the 1960s. But the tapes of the show, *Thank Your Lucky Stars*, have been lost. They are among many classic TV gems 'missing — believed wiped'.

The others include episodes of *Dr Who*, *The Likely Lads*, *Till Death Us Do Part*, *Opportunity Knocks*, *Sunday Night at the London Palladium* and *Emergency Ward 10*. The British Film Institute yesterday launched a campaign to track down the vanished tapes. They include *Thank Your Lucky Stars* (1961 to May 1966) made by ABC for the ITV network.

Janice Nicholls, then aged 17, and from West Bromwich, became an instant hit on the show because of her broad Black Country accent. She was on a panel giving marks to Just-released records and thrilled fans when she awarded maximum points with the remark: 'Oi'll give it foive'. Janice, now aged 46, is married with two children. She lives in Hednesford, near Cannock, Staffordshire.

Vintage newspaper cutting contributed (in 1993 and just discovered!) by Alan Keeling.



YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE!

Many thanks to the kind (but anonymous) soul who sent a Pye Lynx camera manual "to go to a good home". If anyone has this camera but no manual, please *ring* the editor (and form an orderly queue). First come, first served.

GEC BT2147 SERVICE INFORMATION

An extremely detailed article with photos and circuit diagrams on this highly collectable 9" set (bakelite case) can be found in the latest issue of *Radio Bygones* (no. 53, June/July 1998). The odd few people who are not already subscribers to this excellent magazine can obtain a copy by sending a cheque for £3.25 to *Radio Bygones*, 9 Wetherby Close, Broadstone, Dorset, BH18 8JB.

New book announcement

THE BRITISH TELEVISION CATALOGUE, 1923-1939: A CHRONOLOGICAL PROGRAMME LISTING AND INDEX. £65, hardback, ISBN 0-948911-30-1.

This is a book you cannot buy – yet. But you'll probably want to. The publication date is December next and we thought you would want to know about this exciting venture (which has been many years in the making). The remainder of this note is taken from the publisher's own advance announcement.

This innovative new book is a detailed chronological listing of every programme and broadcast in British television's earliest period, charting the development of the medium from John Logie Baird's first primitive experimental transmissions – his attempts at "seeing by wireless" – in 1923 to the shutdown of the BBC on the outbreak of the Second World War.

There has never been any form of catalogue published covering the pioneering period of British television programmes (*Radio Times* began only partial television listing as late as 1936). Although BBC Television officially commenced in November 1936, it was regularly transmitting Baird-produced programmes from as early as September 1929. And Baird-produced programmes without help from the BBC actually began a year earlier during the National Radio Exhibition at Olympia.

Here for the first time are the names of those creative pioneers behind the cameras who wrote and produced many of the earliest television programmes, and those bygone entertainers who performed in them. Entries provide times, transmission dates and times, credits (producer/writer/presenter), cast lists (with character names), and synopses. The vast index lists every personality and programme title, as well as songs, sketches and pieces of music. The author's painstaking research also reveals numerous 'firsts' in television history, thus correcting the establishment's

handed-down history - for example, that the first televised play was John Maddison Morton's *Box and Cox* (15 December 1928), nearly two years earlier than previously thought.

Drawing on extensive archival material and other scattered information, this book is of enormous historical interest, and serves as a unique reference source to the programmes and personalities of the first 17 years of the world's most powerful medium of information and entertainment.

Hailed by the *Sunday Times* as the "custodian of the nation's nostalgia", Denis Gifford is the author of over 50 books, many of them catalogues of British film production. He is also a deviser of television and radio programmes, and a cartoonist, and has lectured on comics and films. His most recent book is **Entertainers in British Films**.

❖ The publisher of Denis's new book is Flicks Books, 29 Bradford Road, Trowbridge, BA14 9AN (telephone 01225-767728, fax 01225-760418).

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Philip Elsmore, former Thames Television continuity announcer has been spotted doing similar work on Westcountry TV. Apparently he was also seen a couple of years back as a judge in *Eastenders* (the trial of the chap who killed Nigel's wife).

NEW ON THE WEB...

The Alexandra Palace Television Society, open to former staffers who worked at AP and which works actively to preserve the memories and artefacts of what was once the London Television Station, now has a site on the Internet, enabling people from anywhere in the world to visit the site and find out more about the Society.

Since the site was made available, toward the end of January, there has been considerable interest in the site, and two people researching various aspects of the history of television, have contacted the Society as a result of the web site.

In many ways the present site is still experimental, giving details about A.P.T.S., the reasons for its inception, its aims and objectives, and the fact that the Archive is available for anyone researching the history of television at Alexandra Palace.

It is hoped, in time, to have the Archive database holdings listed on the web pages, so that visitors to the site will be able to see the variety of information that we hold.

Visitors to the site are able to read descriptions of the various categories the archive material is divided into. A history of the society is also available, along with a tour of the studios at Alexandra Palace, (at present in words only, although a few pictures are also included).

Also included are links to other television related sites; the National Museum of Photography, Film & Television, Alexandra Palace, the British Film Institute, also the BBC site recalling the beginnings of public television from Alexandra Palace in 1936, (recognition at last!)

Eventually, it is planned for the site to contain a graphic map of the studios at Alexandra Palace, so that visitors will be able to click on various sections that interest them, and be presented with pictures, articles, and

possibly, even audio clips. Unfortunately, all this takes time, so it will be some time before the web site can boast any of these additional features.

For those members of A.P.T.S. who have the inclination and necessary equipment to gain access to the Internet, the A.P.T.S. web site can be found at:
<http://members.aol.com.qptsarc>

... AND ALSO...

Michael Bennett-Levy has opened a 'virtual' antique shop for old technology treasures in which everyone can display their surplus assets. The website is at
<http://www.earlytech.com>

... AND EVEN

"We are collectors of vintage television; our holdings number about 12,000 episodes, give or take a few thousand. We lost count a long time ago. Our passion is watching and sharing the great programs of the first few decades of TV. On this page you can find lists of the series we have, and the specific episodes of each that we can get to you." And that page is
<http://www.cjnetworks.com/~tuckers/epPartners.htm>

STANDARDS CONVERTERS FROM 625 TO 405 LINES

This subject is a regular source of questions. Building your own converter is **not** a realistic proposition unless you already have seriously advanced design and construction facilities. It's not a task for amateurs, not even for gifted ones. Many of the parts needed are available only from professional sources and not in one-off quantities, whilst some previous designs for converters can no longer be copied because the custom chips are no longer made. For precisely that reason the **Dinosaur** converter is now out of production; in addition all remaining stocks of the **Pineapple Video** product have now been sold. So that's it for the time being. Tough luck if you held back on placing your order! Confucius he say: 'If you arrive at the party a day late, you can't expect there to be any food left'... (If he didn't say it he should have done).

Adrian Hurt, who assembled the last few Pineapples, is considering the possibility of a new product along these lines but it will depend on customer demand and reservations will probably need to be accompanied by deposits if he decides to go ahead. If you wish to express your interest, please send a SAE to Converter Information, 8 Lime Close, Ware, SG12 7ND). How long it takes Adrian to reply will depend entirely on how many people respond. The price will most probably be around £500 to account for rising prices, the considerable amount of redesign work required and the small number of converters likely to be produced.

VINTAGE LIGHT MUSIC SOCIETY

Following the sad death of Stuart Upton, the organiser and leading light of this group, we have had to remove the directory entry. As the society was very much the late Mr Upton's creation, the decision has been taken to let the society lapse; the light music field is in any case covered admirably by the Robert Farnon Society. Please do not send any letters to the old address.

IN MEMORIAM 1

Britain's King of the Jingles, **Johnny Johnston**, who wrote thousands of catchy advertising tunes for television and radio all over the world, has died aged 78. Mr Johnston, whose jingles included "Beanz Meanz Heinz" and "I'm going well on Shell", died in a private London hospital, friends said. He had been ill for some time, according to friend Bill Cotton, former managing director of the BBC. Mr Johnston was among the first to realise the potential of TV advertising.

Source: Ceefax page 591, noted by Darren Meldrum

Jeremy Rogers adds: In each of these Johnson (which is the correct spelling) wrote just the music; other such examples were "This is luxury you can afford, by Cyril Lord", and "1,001 cleans a big, big carpet". I think he was fully responsible for "Now hands that do dishes can feel soft as your face", and "Softness is a thing called Comfort".

IN MEMORIAM 2

(via MHP-Chat)... "I'm sure you've all heard about the sad death of **Edwin Astley**, a giant amongst television music composers! You can read the obituary written by his daughter and re-live some of his finest tunes at the Elstree Productions Home Page, www.elstree.pobox.co.uk/elstree

ANALOGUE SWITCH-OFF

A parliamentary committee has recommended that Britain should pull the plug on analogue television transmissions by the year 2010 to speed the country's transition into the digital age. The Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee called for Prime Minister Tony Blair's government to announce a switch-off date for analogue television by the end of this year. The recommendation was contained in a report entitled *The Multi-Media Revolution* and although the government does not have to accept the proposals, it must respond to the report in two months. The report was praised by British Digital Broadcasting (BDB) which plans to offer digital terrestrial television broadcasts in the autumn. [Reported 21st May 1998]

Ed Ellers commented on the Internet: "The changeover from 405 lines to 625 took just about 21 years, and they want to go from only PAL to only DVB in twelve? In the U.S. the FCC has set a tentative cut-off date in 2006 for the transition to digital TV, but in the Telecommunications Act of 1996 there is an escape clause that allows any station to continue simulcasting an NTSC signal if at least 5 per cent of viewers in their service area have only analogue receivers *and* don't subscribe to cable. (The assumption is that cable subscribers would get an analogue output from their set-top box.)"

NOW THERE ARE THREE

Colomor Electronics Ltd, suppliers of valves and other vintage components at very realistic prices and late of the Goldhawk Road in Shepherds Bush, west London, has moved to Billingshurst, Sussex. This must make the fair city of Billingshurst the valve capital of Britain, what with Billington Valves and Phil Taylor already established there. Something must be going on, although I haven't fathomed out yet whether it's synergy or collusion!

Be that as it may, Colomor Electronics Ltd is now at Unit 5, Huffwood Trading Estate, Bookers Road, Billingshurst, Sussex, RH14 9RZ. Telephone

01403-786559, fax 01404-786560, e-mail sales@colomor.demon.co.uk. Even handier, the company lists its stock and prices on a website, www.colomor.co.uk.

NO KALEIDOSCOPE VINTAGE PROGRAMMES EVENT THIS YEAR

This is a statement from the Kaleidoscope team: "Due to the fact our organisers are heavily committed to various other projects this year, it was decided several months ago that Kaleidoscope would be unable to stage *The Main Event* in 1998. Although it is obviously too early to make formal announcements at this stage, we do have tentative plans for *The Main Event* to return, improved and reinvigorated, in the autumn of 1999".

Watch this space or the Kaleidoscope website (www.petford.demon.co.uk/kaleidos) for further developments.

CHARLEY SAYS 2

I understand the second volume of *Charley Says* (old government 'public information films' shown on television as fillers) will be released early in July. Details on the 625 Television Room, <http://625.simplenet.com/>

Darren Meldrum

MORE TEST CARDS ON THE WEB

If you have a look at

<http://www.snellwilcox.com/html/download.html>

you will find two screensavers of test patterns, one for 525 and another for 625. There are some other screen shots if you have a look at

<http://www.snellwilcox.com/html/sw2desc.html>

Information on the new widescreen Test Card M can be found on these two sites:

<http://www.snellwilcox.com/news/testcardm.html>

http://www.dtg.org.uk/dtgstuff/conf_tcm.htm

DENCO TELEVISION – AN APPEAL FOR HELP

The Denco name will be familiar to many of our readers even if they never bought any Denco products. The firm is still in business and Ron Allwright, son of the company's founder, is also building up a museum collection of Denco products made over the years. Although the majority of Denco products were radio-related, the firm did make 100 television receivers around 1949/50 along with 50 self-assembly kits in 1954. Ron says the company still has all the drawings – but not a single example of the actual products. He would be extremely pleased to buy back a Denco television for the firm's museum; any set surviving is likely to carry either the Denco name or possibly that of Maxi-Q, another branding of the same company.

You can reach Mr Allwright on 01255-422213 (daytime) or 01255-424161 (evenings and weekends). I told him that 405 Alivers are a special breed and can find anything rare and unobtainable, so don't let us (or him) down! Let us know if you can assist him; it would make a good news story for the magazine.

DENCO *Superior* TELEVISION

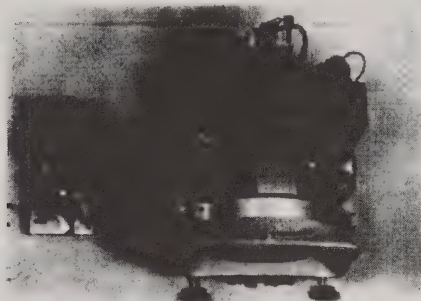


Luxury **CONSOLE MODEL DTR4**

AVAILABLE FOR LONDON OR MIDLANDS
MODEL DTR4/R ALSO PROVIDES RADIO IN ADDITION TO TELEVISION

DENCO

DENCO TELEVISION KITS



D.T.K.3 COMPLETE

This series of complete kits for the home constructor provides all the components required to build an efficient television receiver which will give steady pictures of high definition.

It should be noted that all components, including valves and Cathode Ray Tubes, are of new manufacture, no ex-Government materials whatsoever being used.

The receiver is conveniently divided into three distinct sections, each of which can be separately constructed from the appropriate Denco Kit, and which are of a manageable size for the usually restricted space of the home constructor. Extensive use of the new miniature high-slope valves provides a receiver of high sensitivity and definition which is, at the same time, of more reasonable dimensions than similar sets using older series of valves. This kit is available for London and Birmingham frequencies.

D.T.K.3/12. As above, but with 12" picture tube.

D.T.K.3/R.F.1. R.F. Chassis Kit: London (R.F.2. diode, Birmingham)

This kit provides all the components, valves and 9" (or 12") picture tube required to construct the complete R.F. section of the receiver up to the vision detector in the case of the picture channel and to the A.F. amplifier in the case of the sound channel.

Miniature high slope valves are used in an efficient vestigial, single side band superhet. receiver, with an I.F. of 13 Mc/s. approximately.

The overall response of the receiver will resolve up to the highest modulating frequencies, being flat over the band, with a sharp cut off to prevent interference between the sound and vision signals.

The overall gain of the receiver is very high, being of the order of 85 dBs.—very useful in fringe areas.

The valve line up is as follows:—

R.F.—EF.91: Mixer and Local Oscillator—EF.91: I.F.s—Two EF. 91's;
Vision Detector—Half an EB.91: Sound Detector and 1st Audio—EBC.33:
Sound Noise Limiter—Half an EB.91.

DRAT!

Our idea of a while ago of obtaining a restricted service licence (RSL) from the ITC for a 405-line broadcast has been put to rest; the technical document for RSLs stipulates PAL I transmissions (as well as requiring a £4,250 payment for various licences!). Thanks to Jeremy Rogers for the information.

NEW VIDEO RELEASES

Two pre-war British films with a tenuous but real television connection have just been released on home video, at bargain prices to boot. They are in the *British Classics Collection* series, priced at just £5.99; some of the prints are not brilliant and the quality of duplication is not faultless either (I found head-clogs on each tape) but perhaps you cannot expect perfection at this low price.

THE TUNNEL (1935) is a superb science-fiction yarn about the construction of a transatlantic version of the Channel Tunnel and the effects it has on the marriage of the chief designer. Although the tale drags a bit at times, the special effects are very realistic. The television connection is the coverage of the tunnel's opening, carried on "ultra-wave television" and broadcast from a strange-looking microwave horn atop a concrete tower – remarkably prophetic really.

I WAS A SPY (1933), starring Madeleine Carroll, has an even stronger television connection. A short loop of this film was used as a test film at the Baird company's works for testing the Intermediate Film process cameras, whilst a still of Madeleine Carroll was used on the same company's monoscope camera.

No fewer than 86 classic titles of the 1930s, 40s and 50s have been released in this series, so cineastes will have a field day. If your local W.H. Smiths does not carry these titles, we recommend you call Adrian's Videos (01268-733326), who have won the British Videogram Association's independent retailer of the year award seven years running. Their mail order service is second to none and their monster catalogue of every video tape title in print is the size of a telephone directory. For a modest price they will send you this along with regular classified supplements to keep you up-to-date.

Finally, the BBC has released a tape of the 1966 World Cup on home video. Has anyone here bought this? I'm not a football fan so it's not a must-have purchase for me. But I wonder if the tape includes the programme exactly as transmitted (faint hope?!?), with original continuity links and so on...

CATWEAZLE ON VIDEO

Aficionados may wish to know the classic Catweazle television series of the 1970s, is released on home video on July 6th.

TEST CARD MUSIC: BAD NEWS AND GOOD

It is understood that the compilations of test card music on Chandos's Flyback label have not met the company's expectations, meaning there will be no more CDs from this firm. That's the bad news; the good news is that a new label, Recur Records, has been formed to carry on the tradition.

Launched in April 1998, Recur Records is a joint venture between Tony Currie and Lucy Reeve – probably two of the country's leading experts on Library Music from the fifties to the present day. Both of the Flyback discs were masterminded by Lucy and Tony, and since it looks like there won't be any more along the same lines, it is "Recur to the Rescue"! Profit is not the issue with Recur; the continuing availability of "seriously fantastic music" is!

The label has launched two discs in differing styles, both from a musical and presentational point of view:

DEVIL-MAY-CARE – TCD 7108 [mono], £10.99 – features the

Perry/Gardner Orchestra, including many compositions by Alan Perry (better known as Ernest Tomlinson), comprising a thirty-minute programme as originally transmitted with BBC's test card back in 1964/5.

FERNSEHEN BEI DAY – ECD 7301, £15.99 – is a little more up-beat, featuring some great German session groups and orchestras recorded in the sixties, with such names as Gerry Day, Ladi Geisler and Jürgen Franke. Twenty instrumental pieces.

Recur aims to release titles on a monthly basis, functioning primarily by mail-order, thus maintaining close personal contact with its customers and, it is hoped, rising to the challenge of requests from time to time.

RECUR RECORDS. P.O. Box 600, Glasgow. G41 5SH (0141-427 0531, fax 0141-427 9139).

MAJESTIC TRANSFORMER COMPANY

The Majestic Transformer Company has opened a website at <http://dSPACE.dial.pipex.com/majestic.trans> (no "www" in the address, by the way). From this I learned that the firm was established in the early 1940s as a rewinding house for various radio transformers and chokes. Over a period of time the service was extended to offer custom built components to specification. Today the majority of their business is in the manufacture of new components and they hold large stocks of our base materials, enabling them to turn around orders within 7/10 days.

For most readers their rewinding service will be of greatest interest; it is interesting to note that they retain all their old records from the 1950s and can turn up data for rewinding many radio and television transformers unaided. Where this method fails, they can unwind existing wiring and count the number of turns. This service takes longer but most rewind jobs are completed within a month.

In addition, the firm can supply a wide range of single and three-phase transformers, auto transformers, audio output transformers and high frequency transformers. The Majestic Transformer Company is at 245 Rossmore Road, Poole, Dorset BH12 2HQ. Telephone 01202-734463, fax 01202-733793, e-mail majestic.trans@dial.pipex.com

IEE ARCHIVES SUMMER EXHIBITION 1998: The BBC at Savoy Hill

In 1923 the BBC, barely a year old, moved into rooms in the headquarters of the Institution of Electrical Engineers at Savoy Hill. It was to remain there until 1932, rapidly expanding and developing, and growing in stature and popularity. The name of Savoy Hill became synonymous with a great age in broadcasting.

1998 is the 75th anniversary of the B13C's move to Savoy Hill, and the IEE's annual Summer Exhibition will mark this anniversary by celebrating the nine years the BBC spent under the IEE's roof. The exhibition will look at the growth of broadcasting and the birth of the BBC, relations between the BBC and the IEE, the Savoy Hill studios and the programmes broadcast from them, and will tell the story using documents, photographs and items from a whole

range of sources. Ray Herbert adds that there will be period television receivers on view a display cabinet showing television items of the period 1929-32.

Where? The Institution of Electrical Engineers, Savoy Place, London WC2. Near to Embankment and Covent Garden tubes and Charing Cross and Waterloo main line stations.

When? 5th August to 25th September, 09.30 to 17.00, Monday to Friday. The exhibition is free and open to all. For more information contact Tim Procter, IEE Archives, 0171-344 8407, fax 0171-344 5395, e-mail tprocter@iee.org.uk

CLASSIC TELEVISION magazine

Classic Television is a new(ish) 40-page A4-format magazine that cashes in on the current craze for 'cult' television. It does the job rather better than several of the big-circulation titles on sales at W.H. Smiths, which is a shame since its distribution is somewhat spasmodic (I discovered it at the MOMI bookshop on London's South Bank). It appears to be a bi-monthly costing just £1.95 and it deserves to succeed, although I have just been told another title in the same genre has just folded. Subscriptions to *Classic Television* are available from Eagle Eye Publications, P.O. Box 13325, London, W5 4GE (e-mail eepublictn@aol.com).

OLD RADIO TIMES COLLECTION SELLS FOR £531

A collection of old *Radio Times* magazines sold for £531 at Dalkeith Auctions in Bournemouth during June. It included special editions from 1925 onwards such as 1935 Jubilee Christmas, 1937 Coronation and 1945 Victory and an early television edition, 1st July 1949.

Dalkeith Auctions proprietor Philip Howard said: "The magazines were all generally in good condition, although they look nothing like the glossy *Radio Times* of today. Like many of the items we sell, they came from someone turning out their attic. People amass a vast amount of old papers during a lifetime, and these are often highly sought after."

A single cigarette card made a good price at the same auction; a William Clarke Tobacco Leaf Girl no. 6 was sold for £165. To sell items by auction, contact Dalkeith Auctions on 01202-292905.

- ❖ Editorial comment: This collection sold for well over ten times its estimate and the price realised emphasises the growing interest in radio and television paperwork. The high price is bad news for buyers perhaps but for sellers this opens up a whole new means of making money.

DEMISE AT DIDSBURY

The old ABC studios in Didsbury are being demolished this summer. Go see the old Capitol cinema in Parrs Wood Road.

Louis Barfe, on MHP-Chat



Dicky Howett went to California for his holidays this year (lucky devil!) This camera is on display at BCS, a used television equipment dealer, and is one of the owners' 'toys'. Not for sale of course.

DINOSAUR TEST CARD F GENERATOR

Product review by Adrian Hurt

The Test Card F generator, which produces the famous colour test pattern in colour (in 625 lines of course) — what can I say!?! It's absolutely brilliant! It's as good as the Test Card C generator and you'll know what I mean when you see it. Provided as a compact ready-built printed circuit board (you just add 12V power supply), it comes complete with the teletext page as per the testcard C generator but with colour!

I cannot fault the quality in any way. If you really want to find fault with this product it will take at least £20,000 of broadcast test gear to find and, the error is small (SC_h phase). The full PAL eight-field sequence is generated with correct Bruch banking and therefore well up to broadcast standards (you should look at some broadcasters' outputs!).

All I can do is highly recommend this to other test card enthusiasts. I would have died for this generator when I worked in the trade, it puts colour bar generators into the Dark Ages, what more can I say. By the way, I put the unit on a Tektronix 1781R Video Measurement Set to do a technical specification check and it is very good!

❖ We showed this review to the supplier (Dave Grant), who comments: "I too have £20,000 worth of broadcast test gear at my disposal so I've now

sorted out the SC_h phase error. I've also put back the missing equalising pulse (Adrian didn't spot that!) and RTR [the designer] went away and banged his head against a wall..." The product is sold for non-commercial use only, at a price of £153 including post and packing, by Dinosaur Designs, 4 Kemble Drive, Bromley, Kent, BR2 8PZ. Our own comment: a superb product at a price far below what it should cost. Get it now whilst you still have the opportunity!

Product review

TELEVISION RECEIVER CIRCUIT DIAGRAMS ON CD-ROM

For some time we television enthusiasts have made envious eyes at radio collectors who now have a vast selection of British, European and American circuit diagrams available on CD-ROM. Now two disks of television circuits have been placed on sale and we must complain no more! By the way, the price of these disks is around £25 each, which compares favourably with other products of this kind.

But why CD-ROM? Well, for a number of reasons I suppose. The most important is that the format is so compact; on a disk less than five inches across you can store hundreds or thousands of circuits without fear of fading, creasing or whatever. When you need one, you can print it off for use. Of course if you already possess all the originals, the attraction may be reduced but even so these CD-ROMs make a handy back-up. Of course, if you don't have a computer, then this is irrelevant.

The actual files supplied are in .TIF format and it must be stated very clearly that these files are supplied on the CD-ROM entirely 'raw' or 'uncooked'. There is no auxiliary program supplied for displaying or printing the files, and whilst this may be no problem for seasoned users, I must say it foxed me at first. I tried the well-known shareware program *Graphics Work Station* and this could cope with some files only, others not at all. I turned then to *Paint Shop Pro*, which worked better and allowed me to zoom in and read the documents properly. When it came to printing the diagrams I fared less well and my printer just churned out useless images half the size of a picture postcard. However, I was then shown how a third-party graphics program such as *Image-In* can scale these images to fit an A4 page and this then worked perfectly. No doubt the more 'wired' people among us know of other programs with this capability; perhaps they will let us know.

The source of the documents scanned into the CD-ROM appears to be a mixture of original documents, the well-known book **Television and Radio Servicing**, magazines such as *Radio Marketing*, *Radio Revue* and what looks to be the *BVWS Bulletin*. The scans have been made extremely well, meaning that results are also excellent.

The CD-ROM medium is not really designed for casual browsing; for this the original paper medium is much more convenient and user-friendly. On the other hand, CD-ROM beats paper for compact storage and the colour pictures on the CD sleeves look more attractive! The coverage of these disks is quite remarkable and here is a summary.

Part 1. Philips continental TVs (mainly b/w), circuits, service bulletins and folders. British 405-line sets 385U, 485U, 492U, 600U, 683U, 704A, 1100U, 1101U, 1114U, 1200U, 1229U, 1238U, 1400A, 1427U, 1800A.

Part 2. British pre-war sets (Cossor 54; Ekco TA201, TCS30; Marconi 707) and a huge selection of post-war sets down to 1953, plus many German, Belgian, French sets and some East Bloc examples).

Minimum PC system requirements are 386 processor, Windows 3.11 and a graphic display program. Note that there are no instructions supplied; it is assumed you are proficient using CD-ROMs and a computer. The (minimal) sleeve notes are in Dutch and whilst they are fairly self-explanatory, you may find the following glossary helpful..

Afbeeldingen en buizenbezetting	= illustrations and valve layouts
Duits	= German
Engels	= British
Frans	= French
Kanalen-kiezer	= tuner
KTV	= CTV, i.e. colour TV
Oost-europese	= eastern European
Seizoen 1955	= 1955 season
Service maandblad	= monthly service bulletin
Televisie	= television
T/m	= up to
Toestellen	= sets
Verkoop folder	= sales leaflet
Volgende	= following
Voor-oorloogse	= pre-war

The CD-ROMs **Television part 1** (order code CD-02) and **Television part 2** (order code CD-06) cost 98 German marks each, or 75 marks if two or more items are ordered at the same time. Postage is included. Payment must be in German marks; Eurocheques are acceptable. Orders to Wilfried Meier, Schepdonksweg 11, D-47625 Kevelaer-Wetten, Germany.

Other suppliers of data on CD-ROM include:

BPS Inc., 164 Winter Haven, Brownsville, TX 78521, USA. Complete *Rider* collection of volumes 1-23 (30,000 pages), priced \$249.00.

MAURITRON TECHNICAL SERVICES, 8 Cherry Tree Road,

Chinnor, Oxon., OX9 4QY (01844-351694, fax 01844-352554). Disk contains *Trader* service sheets for 500 sets from the 1930s-1950s, priced £49.95.

Wilfried MEIER, Schepdonksweg 11, D-47625 Kevelaer-Wetten, Germany (00 49 2832-2544). CD-01 Radio receiver circuits, comprising all 11 volumes of Lange/Nowisch; CD-02 Complete Philips radio service documentation from 1927 to 1945; CD-03 Philips radios BX series from 1947 to 1957; CD-04 Philips test equipment (all GM types); CD-05 Philips TV receivers from 1948 to 1968 (including British sets and first-generation colour sets); CD-06 TV Miscellany (British pre-war sets and post-war sets down to 1953, plus many German, Belgian, French sets and some East Bloc examples). Each CD-ROM costs DM98.00 post paid.

OLD COLONY SOUND LABORATORY, Box 243, Peterborough, NH 03458, USA (00 1 603-924 6371, 00 1 603-924 6526; fax 00 1 603-924 9467). Disk version of the 4th edition of Radiotron Designer's Handbook, \$29.95.

RADIO ERA ARCHIVES, 2043 Empire Central, Dallas, Texas 75235, USA (00 1 214-358 5195, fax 00 1 214-357 4693). Rider's Perpetual Troubleshooter's Manual with additional new material and index, covering the original 23 volumes in six CDs, \$85 per CD or \$450 the set. Plus RCA Radiotron Repair Handbook and other old reference books on CD at \$85 per volume (details at <http://www.electrosys.com>).

AE

Book review

GUGLIELMO MARCONI IN LONDON: AN HISTORICAL TOUR

One of the problems of 'ancient history' is bringing it to life. For truly dedicated enthusiasts this is no problem but for less passionate folk, especially the younger generation, old artefacts and personages seem so desperately remote. This is a problem that the heritage industry is having to face up to; steam train trips and tram rides are nostalgia for a declining proportion of the population; for everyone else they are a quaint trip in time back to a period they positively never experienced, meaning that those who wish to keep old memories alive must constantly find new ways of bringing the past to life.

It is precisely this that Enrico Tedeschi, undoubtedly Britain's greatest Marconi devotee of the current generation, does with his guided tours of the London that Marconi knew. As he says, it is better to make things happen instead of just waiting, and that is just what his tour – and the new book reviewed now – both do. For both achievements Enrico deserves proper recognition.

This book provides a lasting souvenir by describing the locations passed on the tour, including the house where Marconi first lived in London, the place where he conducted his early experiments and first demonstrations,

the hotels and offices he used and the places from which he broadcast. Obviously this is a radio tour and the connection with television is minimal, although the route includes Savoy Hill, which had a Baird connection in 1929 (Marconi's interest in television came later). That said, Enrico's enthusiasm is infectious and I feel anyone will find this book of interest, especially as it also picks on non-radio features such as architectural gems and London's only roadway where vehicles drive on the right. As a bonus the book also includes a chronology and bibliography of Guglielmo Marconi as well as a list of Marconi artefacts and memorabilia in Enrico's own archives and collection.

All in all this is an enjoyable and fascinating read. The 48-page A4 format spiral-bound book is comprehensively illustrated and costs £6 post-paid from Enrico Tedeschi, 54 Easthill Drive, Brighton, BN41 2FD. If you would like to join an *accompanied* tour of Marconi's London (covering three miles of easy walking in around three hours), ring Enrico on 01273-701650. Tours are arranged at intervals; the next is on Saturday 25th July. An itinerary can be found on the Internet at <http://www.Brighton-UK.com> and a booking form/leaflet can be had in return for a stamped addressed envelope.

AE

Book review

TELEVISION: AN INTRODUCTORY GUIDE TO ITS HISTORY

With a cover based on the 'Television Number' of the *Radio Times*, this 16-page A4-format booklet has a striking appearance. Inside is a generously illustrated chronology of television and television programming from 1936 to 1993. Dick Fiddy is the compiler and he does a good job (I noticed only one error and that was probably a typo). This is an 'educational' booklet aimed chiefly at students but it will appeal to many other readers. Not cheap at £3.50 but this is for a limited market, I suppose. Sold at the MOMI bookshop, no ISBN. Museum of the Moving Image, South Bank, London, SE1 8XT.

AE

Book review

OLD TELEVISION

I was certainly glued to the pages from the word go, indicating that interest in this subject never really dies away – it just lies dormant, waiting to be stimulated. I think this book performs the tricky task of appealing to readers both 'in the know' as well as the more casual person, who may be approaching more from the nostalgia angle. It must be the first book to offer practical advice on enjoying old television in the home as opposed to merely peering curiously at dusty museum objects. Nice use of photos too. I hope feedback

from the publication is positive and that sales go some way to repaying all the work that went into it.

Steve James

Old Television by Andrew Emmerson (price £2.95). Publisher: Shire Publications, Cromwell House, Church Street, Princes Risborough, HP17 9AJ. Available from bookshops and museums or by mail order from On The Air in Chester (see advertisement on page 78 of this issue).

DONALD FLAMM 1900-1998: A TRIBUTE

Ray Herbert

There can be few followers of television history who are unacquainted with the name of Donald Flamm, who died last February at the age of 98. He was a pioneer of American broadcasting, an Anglophile, instigator of the Voice of America radio transmissions and president of the *Bundles for Britain* campaign during the war. His unflagging support for John Logie Baird is legendary and anyone rash enough to belittle his achievements could count on a robust reply from Flamm, often taking up a full page in the Royal Television Society journal. One such display of loyalty to his old friend resulted in a weighty and rather dismissive riposte in the form of a letter signed by three distinguished television personalities; a clear example of a prophet being without honour in his own country.

Learning of Baird's success in televising the Derby from Epsom racecourse in 1931, Donald Flamm invited him to the USA with a view to setting up television transmissions through his commercial broadcasting station, WMCA. As the negotiations with the Federal Radio Commission advanced, a strong friendship developed and Flamm attended Baird's wedding reception in New York on 13th November that year. Unfortunately, the Americans were not prepared to allow a foreign company to operate a television service and the whole affair collapsed.

He never ran out of steam and during an interview in April last year at his Palm Beach home, he regaled the reporter with tales of "television's toddling years", which was his apt description for those early days.

THE STORY OF EARLY TELEVISION RECORDING

Andrew R. Henderson

I wrote this article because none of the commercially available books could shed much light on this subject. There are many myths already circulating about early television recording. A growing number of 'cultural' and 'media studies' books about early television tell more myths than fact when it comes to information about this neglected history.

You may have heard the common assertion that film recordings were crudely made by pointing a film camera at a standard studio monitor. This is, of course, complete nonsense. The point of this article is to 'de-bunk' such myths and tell the story with the maximum of plain English and as little of the pseudo technical jargon favoured by more recent books on 'television history'.

This is a shortened version of a longer monograph which covers the early development of television recording. To edit the text for magazine use, I have decided to begin the story with the first attempts to record on 405 lines at Alexandra Palace. For readability, I have removed some of the technical details which are not directly relevant.

It is perhaps surprising that the first attempt to record a complete high-definition television programme was at the pre-war Alexandra Palace. Before that, various attempts had been made to record low-definition pictures; however the credit for the first substantial recording must go to the BBC. This pioneering recording was a production of *The Scarlet Pimpernel* lasting three hours and filmed directly from a studio monitor. The recording was made in many takes and much effort was required to overcome the various defects that arise from such a primitive method. Unfortunately, the recording was destroyed.

The reason was an infringement of copyright. It seems that it taking so much effort over the production, the one aspect overlooked was that the BBC did not own the copyright. The person who did was the Hungarian film producer Alexander Korda, and it was on his order that all the film made of the recording was burned. We have some idea of how the recording looked technically from the few surviving shots taken from TV screens on newsreels of the time. In these we see a slightly distorted image with a fair degree of flicker.

The closure of the television service meant that no further experiments were made until 1946. Around this time, American television had developed to a point where there was a great deal of interest in developing a high quality recording method. Clearly, the option of pointing a film camera at a studio monitor was the most practical; however, as the pre-war experiment showed, the picture flickered constantly. The earliest American attempts dated back to 1938 and used silent 16mm cameras recording at 16fps. This caused flicker (or more properly, banding) to appear as with the BBC experiments. To overcome the flicker the frame rate was reduced to 15fps. At this point the banding was removed, however the recording made was only one half of the interlace that made up the complete picture.

The post-war BBC had also experimented with similar techniques using a recording rate of 16-2/3, which was flicker-free, but with some loss of picture information. The technique was virtually abandoned because it required step printing up to 35mm, as well as a re-recorded soundtrack before the results could be shown from a telecine. It survived to be used for "post mortem" recordings, used for internal use only.

The needs for recording programmes between the U.S.A. and Britain were different. The BBC wanted recording facilities for the ability to repeat outside broadcasts (primarily daytime events) during the main broadcasting hours (primarily evening). This would allow viewers who were at work to see a repeat as well as creating the beginning of an archive of broadcasts which would rival the existing 'sound' archives. In the USA the requirement was for recording as a means of beating the time zone which would mean that programmes could start at the same time coast to coast, regardless of the time difference across the continent.

A problem which had been highlighted by the 16mm experiments was the rather poor quality of the recordings made on that gauge. For this reason, the BBC adopted recording on 35mm film using a camera which recorded half of the interlaced complete picture. The reason for this was the problem of 'pulldown'. This is the time an intermittent film camera takes to advance from one frame of film to the next. The problem was that the time was too slow to record the complete picture information on one frame of film. The method allowed a recording of 50 per cent of the 405-line picture, which is actually only 188-1/2 active lines. A technique called 'spot wobble' was used to vibrate the electron beam on the recording CRT to smooth out the visible line structure. Without this smoothing out technique, telecine attempts produced moiré patterns. It was this method which was used to record the first official recording of a television programme made anywhere in the world. A recording was made of the Remembrance Day Cenotaph Service on 9th November 1947. The recording was shown the same evening.

This system became known as the suppressed frame system and was used until the adoption of the stored field system introduced in 1957. The most remarkable aspect of the system is that a recording of only half the picture information would be acceptable.

It was found that because the vertical information stored was good, despite the lack of horizontal lines, this helped to provide an acceptable picture. It is regrettable that the BBC took a rather pompous view that the general public would not notice the various defects in the recordings. For many years, in fact well into the 1960s, the *Radio Times* would include a small label on the end of a programme listing to say that it was a BBC telerecording, or later a BBC recording. To start with the telerecordings were known as 'Telefilms'.

Eleven days after the Cenotaph recording, a second recording was made of the Royal Wedding. This recording was shown by NBC in New York 32 hours later. Although the recordings were a great success, the technical quality was way below the live 'video' picture from the Emitron cameras. The BBC then decided to develop a method which did not rely on an intermittent camera. This method involved the use of an adapted German cinema projector called Mechau. Experiments were made in early 1948 resulting in a system that could record the complete picture information.

The Mechau projector was unique in that it operated without an intermittent movement. The film was projected in continuous motion, with mirrors used to seamlessly dissolve from one frame to the next. The BBC technicians turned

this idea around to make the projector a camera. This stroke of genius allowed them to make a camera which could pass film through at 25 fps and record the 405-line picture intact. The results from tests were superior to the suppressed field system. On this basis a film recording room with two Mechau cameras was set up at Alexandra Palace. As with the suppressed field recordings, two cameras were needed because the 35mm spools lasted for about 10 minutes. Thus, alternating use was made of each camera (which had its own recording CRT monitor) until a programme was recorded. The monitors were made to a BBC specification by Pye and had a scanning area of 8.1 by 6.5 inches. The spot wobble method was also applied to remove all trace of line structure.

Good though the results were, certain drawbacks were apparent. These included the sound recording quality, which suffered as the sound was developed secondary to the picture. The BBC adopted variable density recording which was a mistake, as this type of optical recording was even more sensitive to fluctuations in the development process than the alternative variable area recording. Eventually a magnetic soundtrack run in synchronism with the film was found to be the best solution to this problem. Another drawback was the cost of making a recording. This was at the very minimum (at 1949 prices) around £70 per hour. For this price a single 35mm film on reversal stock was made. This was not really satisfactory as there was a need for a negative. If negative film was used (and thus a print produced from it) the cost per hour increased by roughly double.

There were problems with loading of spools too. It took at least three minutes to load a spool on to a Telerecording machine, which allowing for the 10 minutes of spool capacity, would have kept the operators fairly busy. The spools were geared to take a maximum of 1000ft; however, there was an experiment made to see if a very large supply of uninterrupted film would record without failure.

By the time the Mechau system had been adopted for a few years, interest in developing extra telerecording facilities for the upcoming Coronation, had become a priority issue. The suppressed field system was redesigned with new features to ensure that the problems in the original system were ironed out to such a degree that the picture quality of the recording was though suitable for broadcasting. Interesting features of the system were the additional unit which provided a 'blanking pulse' to black out the tube during the pulldown of the film in the camera. This was triggered mechanically by a cylinder coupled to the camera which reflected light from a lamp to a photocell. A clever touch was the adjustment layer on the cylinder, which allowed fine tuning of the blanking pulse to exactly one frame of film being moved down. The camera itself had to be regularly cleaned with compressed air. The lens on the 35mm camera was 2 inches in diameter.

By this time Eastman Kodak in America had developed a 16mm film recorder which recorded at 24 fps on a 1200ft spool from the 525-line 30-frame picture. Their solution to the pulldown problem focused on the camera shutter which was tailored to suit the process. This system worked well, largely because the pulldown problem was not so critical as it had been with the BBC attempts to

record a 25-frame television picture. These American film recordings were known as kinescopes [short for 'kinescope recordings', because they were taken from the CRT or 'kinescope'].

After this point things settled down for a few years. The Kodak system was copied and adopted elsewhere. It was not developed to a 35mm system, although experiments were made by Paramount Pictures as a means of providing large screen television. In Britain, similar experiments were made in 1952 by a company called High Definition Films Ltd.

By 1953 the BBC used the Mechau system for all their important recordings. In some cases, both the suppressed field method and the Mechau were used at the same time. The best example is the Coronation broadcast. The Mechau was used for the archive print and the suppressed field method was used for the overseas and evening repeat compilation. Despite the use of the Mechau method, the picture quality was still an issue due to defects in the film transport mechanism. Around this time the BBC began experiments into what would become 'V.E.R.A' or Vision Electronic Recording Apparatus. This system was designed to record pictures on magnetic tape.

The BBC were not alone in this research area. In America there had been a great deal of problems with the quality of audio disc recordings. Whilst this did not matter for speech only broadcasts, music broadcasts suffered. NBC fell into dispute with Bing Crosby, who wanted to record his Kraft Music Theatre show in advance. NBC would not allow this because of the poor quality of the recordings on disc. Crosby moved his show to ABC, where he was allowed to record the show. However the ratings dropped soon after the disc recordings were used for broadcast. What Crosby required was a magnetic tape recording system. The Second World War had resulted in the development of such systems in Germany. After the war, the patents were picked up by a few American companies, one of which was the interrelated Californian Ampex firm. By 1948 tape recording had been developed to a point in which it could be used for broadcast. Crosby made a great deal of profit out of the development of the audio reel to reel tape recorder. It did not take long for Crosby's firm to gain an interest in television recording.

Almost four years after the Cenotaph telerecording by the BBC, Bing Crosby Enterprises demonstrated a video-tape recorder which recorded a black-and-white 525-line picture on one-inch magnetic tape at 30fps. This recorder used tape running at 100 inches per second. The reels at maximum could record 16 min. of programme. Months later, RCA demonstrated their recorder which used a 17-inch reel of 1/4 inch tape to record four minutes. In addition a demonstration was made of colour 1/2 inch tape recording, which was noticeably far from perfect.

Bing Crosby enterprises revealed their colour recorder in September 1953. Neither of these systems was used commercially. They all recorded signals at high speed on linear tracks (a staggering 12 tracks on the initial Bing Crosby b/w recorder!) which was wasteful to the point where film recording was cheaper.



1938 boxing match recorded direct from the screen

**Opening night of Anglia Television:
early Ampex recording**



The BBC's V.E.R.A. was similar to the American experiments, except that it used three recording tracks, one of which was for audio. V.E.R.A. was capable of recording 15 min. programming at 200 inches per second on 1/2 inch magnetic tape. The reels were 21 inches in diameter.

Work was still in progress on this recorder when the Ampex company made a breakthrough, resulting in a press demonstration of a new type of video recorder in April 1956. This recorder used a 'quadruplex' technique to record a signal via four high speed heads vertically as a two-inch magnetic tape travelled horizontally. The Ampex recorder could record a picture at 15 inches per second. The first official use of the Ampex recording was in November 1956, when CBS began using the recorder, beginning with a news broadcast on the 30th November. During this early period, a programme was recorded as live on both Kinescope and video-tape. The Video-tape was used for broadcast with the Kinescope run in parallel in case of technical difficulty. In the next year, Ampex would receive over 100 orders for recorders from both TV stations and the US Government.

The experimental news broadcast recording was followed by a closed circuit test recording of *Art Linkletter's House Party*. The recording quality was reported as impressive, except for instances in which the picture was affected by 'drop out'. This was attributed to the primitive quality of the magnetic tape rather than a defect in the machine itself.

The news broadcasts (*Douglas Edwards and the News*) were then taped regularly from that time onwards. CBS began using their two machines for other programmes - *Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts* was one of the first to be used for coast to coast broadcast. The number of orders to Ampex increased as their equipment rapidly became an industry standard.

One place they did not receive an order was from Britain. Despite the fact that Ampex recording was in general use in America by the end of 1957, there was no sign that the method would be adopted by the BBC or the new Independent Television stations. Various articles in the media pointed to a conspiracy between the BBC and the ITA. It was around this time that the BBC unveiled V.E.R.A. in two showings. The first was to the press on 8th April 1958, followed by the first public demonstration on the *Panorama* programme a week later.

In this broadcast the viewers saw Richard Dimbleby in full schoolmaster mode, demonstrating the instant time delay effect of videorecording by use of a stopwatch clock. Luckily the programme was telerecorded and we can still see that the V.E.R.A. recording is markedly inferior to the live broadcast. However, at the time, anyone watching must have sensed a kind of magic in seeing an instant replay. V.E.R.A. was really outmoded before it had even been demonstrated, especially as within a few weeks of the *Panorama* broadcast, in May 1958, Associated Rediffusion installed the first pair of Ampex machines in Europe.

The Ampex machines cost about £50,000. These recorders were known as the VR-1000 series. Obviously some of the time taken for a British company to obtain Ampex machines was due to the need to tailor a machine for use with the 405-line 50-field British system. Strangely, the BBC did not buy an Ampex machine quickly and it was only some six months later on 1st October 1958 that a single machine was installed at Lime Grove. It has been suggested that Ampex were not keen to supply the BBC with a machine.

During the delay the BBC took to obtain a machine, Associated Rediffusion began to use the machines to provide inserts in live programmes. The first of these was a Dickie Valentine series called *Free and Easy*.

Ironically, during all this innovation, the BBC adopted a new method of telerecording designed to replace the Mechau system. The suppressed field system equipment was updated to record both frames. This system became known as the stored system. The technical breakthrough that allowed this to be achieved was the development of a new type of monitor tube which had a strong after glow effect. The elegance of the system meant that both frames of the picture could be recorded on a single frame of 35mm film with a far greater degree of clarity than the Mechau system.

The stored system had a drawback. The tube delay was such that fast moving action became blurred or even invisible on the recording. There was no way to prevent this (the tube was coated with cadmium chlorophosphate).

Work on telerecording at the BBC resulted in four systems being used by the early sixties and it was these methods which would be used until the last b/w telerecordings were made around 1974. The systems were two using 16mm film, the first of which was a 16mm stored field and the second was a rapid pull down similar to American 16mm recorders. The other two were 35mm, one being the previously mentioned 35mm stored field which wasn't used for recordings with fast movement, the other was a 35mm semi-rapid pull down recorder which used a double exposure to record both frames of the television picture on one film frame.

The 35mm recordings were so good that they could now be used to record programmes in advance, although an untrained eye could easily spot the difference between a 'live' picture and the film recording. 16mm recordings were made for overseas sales and the result was the beginning of a large number of recordings shipped abroad.

ITV persisted with telerecordings, although most companies abandoned 35mm recording for the more economical 16mm recordings used purely for overseas sales or archive use.

Public knowledge mixed with more than a little conjecture has clouded the thorny fact that many television programmes do not survive from this era. Popular myth dictates that a vast amount of junking was carried out, however, whilst this was true for many isolated cases, video-tape and telerecordings were often destroyed regularly for reasons other than sheer ignorant vandalism.

The video-tape was not thought to be suitable as an archive medium. They had a finite number of times they could be used. Ampex suggested twenty; however, in practice this was usually at most seven. The tape was not coated to prevent oxide shed, which together with fluctuating oxide coating meant that they were more unreliable than today's equivalents. There is no doubt that dropout and varying picture quality were present in recordings made in the early days. By 1962, the cost of a video-tape was £120, compared to £47 for a 16mm telerecording negative plus one print. Perhaps this may give some idea for the reasons in not keeping video-tapes for archiving. As costs fell and tape quality improved, this became more realistic. One important factor in the use of video-tape as an archiving medium was the poor results obtained with colour telerecording. The introduction of colour forced the increased use of tape as an archive medium.

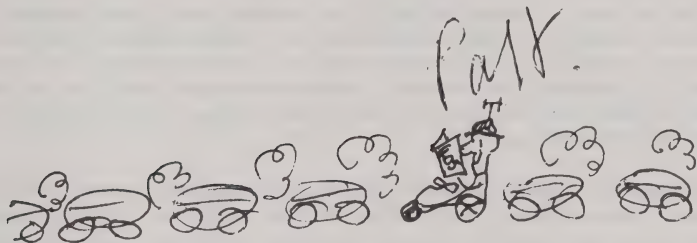
Therefore it was the new methods of telerecording which (at least in the BBC) were used to keep 'for posterity' selected programmes. Some programmes were not meant to be kept, in fact to be destroyed in agreement with the copyright tied up in the production of a series. The cost of video-tape began to fall in the early sixties to around £90 per tape. Ampex introduced their VR-1100 b/w recorder which sold for half the price of its predecessor. The year the VR-1100 recorder was introduced, 1962, the battle to produce a simpler form of broadcast quality recorder was well underway between RCA, Sony, JVC, Toshiba and in Europe, Phillips and Grundig. This would eventually result in 'helical' scan recorders.

In Britain, both ITV companies and the BBC presented recorded programmes which often had a mixture of tape and film cut together. It became common to use tape for interiors and film for exteriors. Telerecording was still widely used on 35mm to record programmes and re-edit for broadcast. Despite all the advances on video-tape recording, all the television stations had difficulty editing video-tape. The only way known to do this was to physically cut the tape. Initial tryouts revealed that this was next to impossible due to a complete loss of picture synchronism on the cut in the tape.

This was eventually solved by scheduling all such cuts to joints in scenes in which there was a fade to black. Cut picture was rare. A special splicer was used and this bulky grey device would enlarge the section of tape to be cut, on which a cut could be made between the recording tracks which had been revealed using a special liquid applied to the tape. Once a tape was cut it could not be reused. After initial broadcast and a possible repeat, the tape was used to make a 16mm telerecording for overseas use, or a 35mm for archive use (this was much rarer – in practice hardly ever done).

Because of the tape editing problems, 35mm telerecordings were still used well past the dawn of colour television. These last programmes recorded in this way show how far the process had been stretched. Some of them look almost as good as the original video-tape. This was partly due to the adoption of 625-line recording. This had appeared in use in the early sixties experimentally, until adopted in 1964 for BBC2.

Here this article must end. It would take another article to cover the development of electronic editing, colour and the associated revolution brought with them, resulting in helical scan recorders. If any *405 Alive* readers can provide more information on telerecording and early video-tape and any corrections to this article I would ask them to write in to the magazine.



Wilf Pafford has sent in another article, which we're holding over until the next issue. Meanwhile, here's a self-portrait of the great man reading his copy of *405*, apparently with some pleasure!

This article, written by William Cave just prior to the opening of Lime Grove studios, appeared first in The Emitron, the newsletter of the Alexandra Palace Television Society, and is reprinted here by kind permission of the editor.

THE LONDON TELEVISION STATION

Eighty-five years ago crowds of recreation-bound Victorians first climbed the hill to inspect the stuffed animals which formed the major attractions offered by Alexandra Palace. Today there is only a huge and hideous derelict building, completely fallen from its purpose of entertainment – except for one corner. Here in paradoxically contrast flourishes the great entertainment of the future.

Fourteen years ago BBC architects designed the first television station so that it would fit into the Victorian edifice. They proved commendably well that the two were not irreconcilable. True, there are more functional stations built now, but this one will last some time yet – and it will have to, the way things are. It isn't possible for everyone to see for themselves, so let's take a look around on paper.

Under the 220-foot mast, the office suites in the tower are occupied by the senior executives, who enjoyed the most striking view of London, when they have time to look at it. We'll get dizzy staring up at the tower, so push open the heavy swing doors and enter. The front hall just has room for a telephone box, a display stand, a sofa and the commissionaire. The big clock is not right, nor does it agree with any other in the building, it's simply another unexpected hazard of television.

The first door we notice is labelled 'No Smoking' and in smaller letter 'Film Cutting Room'. This room together with an office and the projection and viewing rooms is the Film Section premises. When the television set is not in use, the viewing room becomes a miniature cinema, seating up to thirty people, where producers can see the newsreel and any other films to arrange the cutting and timing.

The spacious vision transmitter and power supply hall is set out with great boxes painted battleship grey and emitting a sickening hum from the delicate machinery they guard. In the centre of the room is a long desk covered with knobs and dials. Facing this are the screens on which the pictures are checked as illustrated in the Demonstration Film. Enormous valves sparkle and crackle with brilliant blue mercury vapour arcs. The whole is run by two engineers who go about their work with unhurried efficiency. The sound transmitter is similar, but smaller and quieter.

A quick queue in the newly painted canteen gets us an excellent meal in the company of all the weird galaxy of performers and engineers and executives. Thus refreshed we can mount the double flight of stairs to the second floor.

In the upper scene dock the scenery and furnishings for the day's productions are standing ready for use. Contributions from the carpenters and painted and the properties' store are assembled in the lower scene dock and hauled up through a big hole in the ceiling to the second floor. As many as twenty sets may be used in one day. Once the programme starts the scene shifters strike one set and replace it with another in a matter of seconds, and continually whole sets are entering and leaving the studios, being 'managed' down the vast high corridor from the scene dock.

The make-up room is no longer the chamber of horrors is used to be, when television was in the experimental stage. Where, in days gone by, actors have come out with purple or black lips and white faces, they now would look only a little unnatural in the street. It is the character make-up which gives the make-up department an opportunity to show their skill. They may have to make an actor twenty years older or younger, or create anyone from a Roundhead to a Cavalier.

The two studios are not identical in lay-out. In 1936 studio B was used with the Baird apparatus, and studio A with the Marconi-EMI. Control room B is on one side of the studio, and has more room for the production staff on the upper floor, but less for the engineers and their equipment. Studio B has three cameras. Studio A has four cameras, and an alcove which is very useful for

such shots as the taxi in Cafe Continental.

The telecine room houses the two telecine machines, with a checking monitor, and the apparatus for rewinding the films after showing. The telecine cameras have no control of their own, but can pass through either A or B control room, so that film sequences can be handled in conjunction with plays in either studio.

The lines termination room is where all OBs come into Alexandra Palace. They may come by cable all the way or by radio link to Highgate and then on by cable. The room has the appearance of a small telephone exchange.

The output from the lines termination room and from A and B control rooms are fed to the central control room. Here, as the Demonstration Film shows, the whole programme is assembled and checked before going down to the transmitters. As usual there are the two screens for preview and transmission, a desk full of switches and buttons, and three or four telephones. In this room also is the master oscillator which provides the synchronising signal which keeps every camera and screen in step.

That is the London Television Station. What of the future? It will be many years before we can have any 'Television City', but there is hope that the BBC will have a new studio somewhere in London in a few months. Ideally, it would be fairly central for the convenience of artists and staff, it would be much bigger than the Alexandra Palace studios, with provision for an audience. It would be linked by cable to the Palace and lavishly provided with the latest equipment. Probably C.P.S. cameras would be called for because of their improved pick-up and elimination of shading adjustments. The producer would have a large cubicle with room for more assistants and gramophones. The apparatus will have gained a great deal from the new OB equipment made for the Olympic Games, but will have to be revised to make it suitable for use some twelve hours a day, at the expense of portability.

Then we can look forward to an increase in the hours of television transmission, and to each show being more thoroughly rehearsed before the cameras.

WILLIAM CAVE

- ❖ *Note the author's opinion that the Alexandra Palace was a hideous edifice. This may sound strange today but it was certainly the accepted viewpoint for three or four decades until the Victorian Society and others started to change attitudes in the 1960s. Even now its artistic merit is pretty minimal and its associations are what truly endear it to the public at large. Attitudes change – remember that so-called 'Victorian Values' were totally taboo until Mrs Thatcher espoused them in the 1980s. Values are never absolute; the nature of art, fashion and artistic and social acceptability is not fixed for all time.*

DON'T LET THE FACTS GET IN THE WAY!

Dicky Howett discovers the World Wide Web

Since I 'got online', the wonderful world of the Internet is now opening before me, surfing (as one does to begin with] all that catches the eye. For us lined-up 405-line chaps, lots of telly sites are available such as test cards and cameras and microphones. Also television receivers (spelt *recievers* usually) plus lots of television history.

Pity about the history. One web site is an American effort called 'The Dead Media Project' and this concerns itself with vanished gadgets. Mechanical television is one such 'lost art' plus the old spinning Nipkow disc which so entranced John Logie Baird.

An 'historical' article embedded in the Dead Media Project site purports to examine Baird's achievements and in particular his experimental television work. The BBC's involvement is also recalled. An impressive list of author's 'sources' is displayed including the 1986 BBC television series *Television*. This should have alerted me. That was the first mistake. *Television* was made by Granada, not the BBC.

The Dead Media article was riddled with inaccuracies, some careless, some unforgivable. I mailed the author my comments and I reprint them below. It should be painfully apparent what mistakes the Dead-beat Media author made. Read on:

Dear Trevor,

I'm Dicky Howett, journalist and one of the trustees of the Alexandra Palace Television Trust. I hope therefore that I know a little about the history of British television and in particular, about John Logie Baird. Your article contained a certain amount of what we in the scribbling trade call 'cobblers'.

To start, the Palace is Alexandra not Alexander. Gender change is not on the historical agenda. Also, it was the Crystal Palace that burnt down in 1936, not Alexandra Palace. Tut tut! AP *has* caught fire twice, it's true; however, nothing televisual was ever destroyed and the studios remain there to this day, albeit unused and dare I say it, derelict. There, I dared!

And then we have that oft-repeated rubbish about the Baird 'eyeball' experiment. (*Baird is reported to have used a live eye plugged into his apparatus*) The story's apocryphal. Baird did perhaps fleetingly contemplate using human optical organs, but remember also, Baird was a master of publicity and science fictions. His 'inventions' included a good few stories likely to appeal to the headline-hungry press. Baird's first official scientific demonstration of his television system before members of the Royal Institution (not *Institute*) was given in Frith Street London on 27th January 1926. However,

Baird did not allow the scientists to inspect his apparatus (it was covered with several black sheets), the reason being that he was using a flying spot method and wanted to keep it secret. It is therefore unlikely that any elderly beard was trapped in the machinery (given by you as a reason for scientific indifference to Baird's work!)

Your facts and chronology also beg further refinement. Pirandello's play (*The Man With A Flower In His Mouth*) was broadcast on 30 lines, not 240, on 14th July 1930. The last BBC mechanical 30-line service transmission went out at 11pm on 11th September 1935 (not August 1936).

The BBC then shifted television to Alexandra Palace where two first floor former banqueting halls 30ft x 70ft x 25ft were converted to television use. The Marconi-EMI all-electronic 405-line system occupied Studio A and the Baird systems (240 lines) consisting of an intermediate 17.5mm film and a Farnsworth camera, occupied studio B, with a small spotlight studio in between. Baird had also a quite good flying spot telecine. The official opening (2nd November 1936) consisted of speeches, a newsreel (Movietone) and a very short variety show. This was transmitted first in the Baird studio, and after a 30-minute break, remounted and broadcast from the EMI studio. The world's first regularly scheduled electronic (apart from Germany, that is) television service was therefore begun mechanically. A fact that the BBC in particular is not keen to emphasise.

The Baird mechanical service at AP was discontinued in Feb. 1937. Studio B was then re-equipped with Emitron electronic cameras.

It would seem from my letter above, that there were perhaps not many mistakes to contend with. The problem is that I spotted only the obvious errors. How many more were there? Will future 'historical' researchers use the Dead Media articles as 'fact'? I can see what the author has done. He's simply recycled old stories; re-told tales and presented them as 'facts'. Very dangerous. Check out the site for yourselves and see what I mean!

www.islandnet.com/~iadc/dm/dm.html

- ❖ Editor's note: I have to support Dicky on this; he is not just being carping. There is so much 'factional' history being presented as fact nowadays that future generations will have a real job distinguishing what did truly happen from hazy recollection or opinion. If any readers ever detect any errors of fact in this magazine, they will be doing us all a favour by pointing them out.

THE FIRST TELEVISION STAR

Who *was* the first person ever to be televised? Most of the books about television—and everyone seems to be writing them these days—ascribe the honour to a Mr. William Taynton who is reported to have been used as the first human television subject by the late John Logie Baird on that exciting fifth Friday in October, 1925. This was the day on which Baird, after months of patient, struggling experiment, exchanged the crude dummy's head with which he had been working for the office boy of the room below his Soho workshop. With half-a-crown as an inducement to stay in front of Baird's Heath-Robinson transmitter, the boy was the forerunner of all those people and things which daily and nightly look out of our screens.

There have been other claimants to this niche in television history, notably Mr. Joseph Hammelford, of Ingestre Place, Soho. Mr. Hammelford says it was he, not Mr. Taynton, whom Baird saw—and subsequently forgot. So far no-one seems really sure—except Mr. Taynton and Mr. Hammelford. Eye-witnesses or contemporaries during 1925 have gone. But the latest book about television records support for Mr. Taynton, though it is in the form of a quotation from someone else.

This is one of the few debatable points which arise in a recently-published book which seems likely to become a standard work on the history and progress of television. **Adventure in Vision** gives its readers a very comprehensive coverage of the television quarter-century—1925 to 1950. The author is well-known to viewers, though they will not recognise his name. John. Swift has for some time written news and gossip items in the television edition of the *Radio Times* under the pseudonym 'The Scanner'.

'M.J.', writing in 1950.

And now an excerpt from Bernard Wilkie's memoirs...

LEAVERS' GUIDE

I've been lucky to have enjoyed a long and rewarding career in television. I have travelled to places I might never have seen, worked as a designer, a comedy writer and a director and been the head of the biggest television special effects unit in the world – and I might have missed it all if I hadn't seized an unexpected opportunity.

In 1948, as a BBC engineer, I became desperately anxious to move into television and had applied to become a set designer at Television Centre. In response to my incessant badgering I was eventually granted an interview with Richard Levin, Head of TV Design.

On the day of my interview I was shown into his office and found him sitting behind a large black leather topped desk on which there was nothing other than an expensive blotter and an onyx pen tray cradling a gold pen and pencil.

Such minimalism impressed me, but looking at the wall behind him my blood froze. In bronze frames were some of the finest costume, stage and opera designs I have ever seen. One glance at these made me realise that I'd be pushing my luck to seek work as a lavatory cleaner.

Levin came quickly to the point. "I understand you want to become a set designer, what examples have you brought to show me?" He indicated my brief-case.

Examples? I opened my briefcase and, scarlet with embarrassment, produced my two amateur stage designs: a couple of awful daubs labelled 'Aladdin - the Cave Scene'. Handing them across the desk I watched his eyebrows constrict in pain. He passed them back without word, sitting for a minute in shocked silence. Then, as if to expunge the memory, he asked me if I knew anything about fibre glass.

My reply should have been "No" because at that time fibre glass was in its infancy and only a few people knew anything about it – and I wasn't one of them. However, realising that at all costs I must prolong the interview I foolishly said "Yes".

His manner changed. "Good," he said, "I've got a representative from a plastics company coming here this afternoon and I'd like you to meet him. Be here at two-o'clock please."

In a dream I found myself outside in the corridor wondering what the hell I'd got myself into. I wanted to flee the building leaving a message to say I'd been taken ill, but I steadied – there was a library at Hammersmith. Surely they would have some books on plastics.

They had, and one hour later I was back at Television Centre with my head full of hastily learned facts and technical terms. At two o'clock I was in Levin's office being introduced to the sales rep.

Although Richard Levin hadn't told me why he was interested in fibre glass, he now revealed that he wanted to investigate its use in the making of lightweight scenery. Television designers in those days were forced to use film studio techniques in which large items were made of timber and plaster. In a film studio where sets were built like concrete fortifications this was fine, but in the television studio where quite large items had to be carried in and out during a performance, anything heavy was a blinding encumbrance.

The sales rep, anxious to clinch a deal talked about his firm's products in detail, but because Levin had introduced me as 'our expert', he addressed his sales pitch at me. I was, clearly, the one he had to impress.

What a turn-around. No longer was I the unspeakable perpetrator of Aladdin's excremental *papier maché* cave, I had become a powerful player in an important game. Nodding sagely, I listened to everything the man said, then I shot him a question. "Yes," I said, "but tell me about the gelling characteristics."

He responded with technical details I didn't even try to understand. I interrupted him again. "And what release agent would you recommend for untreated plaster moulds?"

An hour later the rep and I left Television Centre, he with a substantial order for a trial batch of epoxy resin and glass fibre and me with Levin's unbelievable words ringing in my ears. "If you agree," he'd said, "I'd like you to come here on a three months attachment. If Kingswood will release you, I'd like you to set up an experimental fibre glass workshop – would you be willing to do that?"

Would I be willing to do that? I nearly leapt across the desk and kissed him. I floated home on a bus more beautiful than that Orient Express, my head full of wonderful dreams. I was on my way - I was about to enter the magical world of show business.

H D F, PART TWO

Dicky Howett investigates tele-recordings and the company known as High Definition Films.

To simplify the recording system, HDF used a sequential non-interlaced frame rate of 24fps scanning at between 625 and 834 lines per frame. In practice there wasn't much point in going much higher than 650 lines as the Pye Pesticon (high velocity 'Image Iconoscope' type) picture tubes used in the cameras offered no useful information above that figure. That didn't prevent Collins and Macnamara going into print with exaggerated claims for the system. Several contemporary articles (some, in popular magazines like the TV MIRROR) refer to HDF pictures of 3,000 lines! This was journalistic hyperbole, and wishful thinking, but it happened on too many occasions to have been simply a slip of the tongue. However, Norman Collins was very keen to promote his company (and also the prospect of commercial television.) Eventually, HDF evolved into the Associated Broadcasting (Development) Company and finally ATV.

Technically, the HDF monochrome pictures were recorded using a Moy RP30 35mm recording camera. (The recording-monitor display was of low gamma to prevent beam-spread and reflections. N.D. filters placed over the screen hadn't been devised). The overall bandwidth of the system was 12MHz, a big achievement in those days. The picture period was approximately 650 actual lines but the blanking period was quite long, roughly 1/6th of the picture period. This was filled with a 10 riser grey scale. Also, there was no electronic lock between field and line frequencies. The field pulses were generated mechanically with a synchronous motor spinning an aluminium disc called 'The Whirling Spray' which had a small magnetic insert, generating a pulse. The line frequency was adjusted by a variable master oscillator. There was no

crystal, it was all set by hand. The HDF engineering staff included Walter Kemp, Bernard Greenhead and Quentin Lawrence.

Several HDF productions were undertaken, including short dramas, usually of half an hour in length. These were directed by Desmond Davies and featured actors such as George Coulouris, James Donald, Desmond Walter Ellis and Elizabeth Sellers. Also, a series was produced called *Theatre Royal* which displayed the talents of David Tomlinson, Dora Bryan and Geoffrey Sumner. During that period, Bill Vinten was invited back to light an extract from Macbeth. His director was Orson Welles!

The producer Harry Alan Towers was behind these presentations, most of which were destined for the US market. Unfortunately, criticism of the scripts and production values were not exactly encouraging. Undaunted, HDF forged ahead with various tests and commercials, which were made using real products. These commercials were later shown to members of Parliament to give them a taste of what 'real' Commercial Television might look like.

By mid-1955, High Definition Films ceased production. The programmes *Double Your Money* with Hughie Green and *Take Your Pick* with Michael Miles had been recorded initially at Highbury, but then transferred to AR-TV at Wembley. AR continued to telerecord both programmes (they were telerecorded so the programmes could be edited for length and interest) using a French system and Marconi Mk III 4½ Image Orthicon cameras. Picture quality (405 line-spot wobbled) proved to be just as acceptable as the more elaborate and expensive HDF system. Indeed, the Image Orthicon, as opposed to the dated Photicon tube as used by HDF always had a picture that travelled better to the home receiver. There was never anything to beat the gutsy and dynamic 4½" Image Orthicon that even today can still produce high-resolution monochrome pictures).

During that period, Norman Collins lost control of his bid to set up a commercial television channel. His Associated Broadcasting Company was absorbed by the Prince Littler-Lew Grade consortium, re-titled Associated TeleVision. (ATV used one of the HDF studios at weekends. They installed an OB unit using Pye Mk III cameras and transmitted live shows including *The Trolenberg Terror* and *Emergency Ward 10*).

After Highbury closed, the staff had their contracts bought and they dispersed within the industry. The equipment was mothballed for a time and latterly Pye moved their television demonstration unit briefly into studio 2 at Highbury. In July of 1955, what remained of the HDF Development Group moved into a backroom at a Pye radio factory in Tottenham, North London. An American entrepreneur convinced Norman Collins to set up two film recording channels and three Pye Mk 3 cameras for the purpose of making export programmes (the Pye cameras were painted battle-green and covered with a foam padded 'blimp' arrangement which extended over the lenses. The padded blimp was supposed to muffle the Pye camera's noisy turret and motor). Several recording tests were made, but the American whiz-kid failed to supply the cash or contracts, and the project collapsed.

There was even talk of re-establishing HDF in Hollywood, but such advanced video recording techniques were about 40 years ahead of their time and they would have then foundered there as they did here. Today, little remains of High Definition Films. All that exists are a few elderly magazine articles and photographs, some test recordings and a splendid 20-minute promotion film made in 1953 by Quentin Lawrence. Highbury Studios was demolished in 1960.

- ❖ Dicky Howett would like to thank ex-staff of High Definition Films who supplied many important details for this article.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THE HUMBLE CO-AX PLUG!

David Boynes celebrates the 60th anniversary of the Belling-Lee connector

One of the most familiar components to be employed in a modern television set has in fact been around some sixty years. Almost every TV sold in the UK and in Europe uses a coaxial plug and socket to connect the receiver to the aerial.

The co-ax plug and socket was introduced by Belling-Lee in the late summer of 1938. Mention of the new component appeared in the 1st September 1938 edition of the *Wireless World*. Ekco was the first (and the only?) firm in 1938 to employ the new connector. My 1938 TA201 7-inch screen vision-only receiver has one and although I have never seen any of the 1939 sets, it is quite likely these too employed the Belling-Lee aerial connector (HMV/Marconiphone used a totally different connector before the war).

The 1946 Ekco TSC30 is basically the pre-war TSC902 receiver, and a Belling-Lee socket was fitted to that receiver. For reasons best known to Ekco, the 1947/8 range of television sets employed a car aerial-type of plug and socket. By the late 1950s almost every British television manufacturer employed the Belling-Lee type of aerial socket.

- ❖ Editor's note: According to the *Wireless World* for 20th July 1939, a standard for coaxial television feeder connectors was prepared by the Radio Manufacturers Association – presumably based on the Belling-Lee design. Since then this connector has become an IEC-recognised world standard and is used in many territories of the world. The French have a connector that's slightly smaller and is a very tight (or loose) fit, depending on how you do it, whilst Germany had a somewhat fatter connector that was otherwise similar.

See next page for illustration.

COAXIAL PLUG & SOCKET

Coaxial plug and socket in conduit box for skirting mounting, for air spaced cable.

List No. 373AB.

Price : 6/6

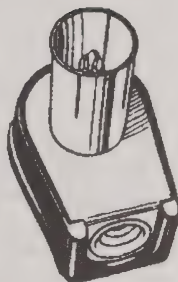
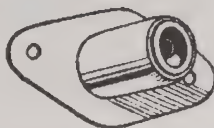
Or Solid Cable—

List No. 373SB.

Price : 6/6

Chassis Mounting—

Air-spaced 373A. 3/6. Solid dielectric 373S. 3/6.



Part of a Belling-Lee press advertisement from August 1938.



NOT THE POTTER'S WHEEL.?!

SAVOY HILL 75th ANNIVERSARY

IMPORTANT TELEVISION TRANSMISSIONS

5th March 1929

BBC-GPO demonstration from Savoy Hill studios. 2LO (vision), Marconi House transmitter (sound).

30th September 1929

Opening of public television service through Savoy Hill from the Baird company's Long Acre studio. This represented the *first* regular television service in the world that (a) was available to the public in their homes and (b) had the programme details published in the press.

14th July 1930

First television play: *The Man with a Flower in his Mouth*.

3rd June 1931

The Derby televised from Epsom racecourse. First-ever television outside broadcast.

15th October 1931 to 18th April 1932

Numerous television programmes from the Savoy Hill studios.

Note

From 1928 until 1932 most of the television programmes originated from the Baird studios in Long Acre. During this period Baird Television Ltd financed the British television service without any help from public funds, providing equipment, studios and staff besides engaging and paying for the performers. They also had to settle the BBC's bill of £5 per half hour for the use of their transmitters.

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING.

J.L. Baird. *Sermons, Soap and Television*. Royal Television Society, 1990.

R.W. Burns. *British Television, the Formative Years*. IEE, 1986.

Susan Briggs. *Those Radio Times*. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1981.

Myles Eckersley. *Prospero's Wireless*. Myles Rooks, 1997

Ray Herbert. *Seeing by Wireless*. PW Publishing, 1997.

Jonathan Hill. *Radio! Radio!*. Sunrise Press, 1997.

RAY HERBERT, 26th April 1998.

A TELEVISION ANNOUNCER'S DAY

D. McDonald Hobley

In a railway carriage, not long ago, a pleasant-looking lady in her middle forties asked, very politely, whether I was the television announcer whom she saw from time to time on her set at home? When I said yes, I expected to be asked questions about every phase of television, including the technical. To my relief all she asked for was a description of an announcer's day at Ally Pally. This, at least, was familiar ground, and I was glad to oblige. And this is what I told her.

My time of arrival at the studios depends on how much I am contributing to the different items in the programme, and the time it is due to begin. Whatever time I turn up, my first visit is to the office of the Production Manager, under whom I work. On duty each day with the announcer is a very helpful individual called the 'Presentation Assistant', and having reported to the Production Manager I immediately seek him out and together we go through the various announcements for the afternoon transmission. A word altered here, a phrase changed there, makes all the difference when you reflect that most announcements have to be committed to memory. Nothing pleases me more than an announcement headed 'Sound only', a self-explanatory term obviating this irksome necessity.

Having satisfied myself that the announcements are something that I can get my tongue round I go in search of the producer responsible for the item in which, perhaps, there are at least seven people with impossible names. A friendly word of advice from him ensures that neither the actors nor their agents take offence. Pronunciations of place-names can be checked with those very helpful individuals in the 'Pronunciation Department'. Armed with my script, or 'running order', as we call it, I now make my way to Dressing Room No.7, once labelled 'Only Announcers' but now amended to read 'Announcers'! Here for the next three-quarters-of-an-hour I endeavour to wear a very thin strip of green carpet to shreds by pacing up and down it, in my effort to memorise the opening announcement. Then downstairs to our canteen. Sometimes, and usually in the middle of lunch, the loudspeaker system booms out a request for me to report at once to the 'Presentation Assistant', who politely informs me that, due to circumstances beyond his immediate control, the opening announcement has had to be rewritten. This doesn't happen often – but it has – and can!

After lunch, there is the important performance of applying one's make-up. Since announcers appear in front of the cameras more often than most people, they are permitted to do it themselves. I am told that in the early days of television – and by early days I refer to the 1930s – make-up consisted of various shades of blue and yellow, but today all that has changed, and our normal make-up resembles that used by most actors and film artists. With a reasonably good grasp of the first announcement, and a distinctly sunburnt appearance, I now make my way to the studio for what I shall always regard as the most unpleasant part of the day's work – namely a lighting session.

Perhaps I had better explain more fully. The announcer is always the first person to appear on the screen, and it is essential that the picture should be as nearly perfect as possible. For twenty minutes before each transmission I

stand in my allotted position while the lighting engineers bear down on me with every type of arc lamp that they can find. Finally, with perspiration seeping from my brow, but knowing that it has all been done with best intentions, I step out of the blaze of light and await my cue to stand in once more and launch the programme on its way.

Now it's two minutes to three, and with a last glance at my script I step in front of the camera again. Although I have been doing this same thing for more than two years now, that 'first night' feeling never leaves me. I've yet to meet the person who can truthfully say that the camera bears no terrors for him.

Directing the artists on the floor is the 'Studio Manager', and on a signal from him, which I can see out of the corner of my eye I know I am 'on the air'. With the words: 'This is the BBC Television Service' I begin my introduction to the first item, but it is soon over, and, breathing a sigh of relief I step out of the lights once more. The number of announcements will, of course, depend the type of programme. For example, if it is a play, you may have only an opening and closing announcement, but a series of small items may mean having to memorise a further six or seven. However many there may be, I never memorise more than one at a time, managing somehow to learn each new announcement during the preceding item.

For the evening transmission preparations begin soon after tea, but sometimes I may be asked to attend the auditions of would-be lady announcers, in which case my normal role is reversed and I become the 'interviewee'. I might be roped in for a rehearsal of some future programme, or, again, I may use this time to go through the scripts for 'Kaleidoscope' - the magazine programme which I compere every other Friday.

Compering, interviewing, commenting, and even conducting 'quiz' programmes all come under the heading of announcers' duties. In a word, this means that until the Television Service has its own large staff of resident commentators, the announcers stand a reasonably good chance of getting ring-side seats at most of the great national events, sporting and otherwise. No one can say that the life is a dull one! Once I found myself in front of a television camera with a twelve-foot python wrapped round my neck (I had been interviewing a keeper from the Zoo) and another time I had to enter the ring with a professional wrestler and spend a considerable time flying through the air with the greatest of ease.

After my evening meal, at about eight o'clock, the lighting process begins all over again. At eight-thirty I introduce the evening programme and at any time between ten and ten-thirty I tell viewers about next day's plans and bid them all a very good night. Soon afterwards, with my make-up removed, my dinner jacket hanging in the wardrobe, you'll find me in the BBC bus on the first stage of my journey home.

As I completed my story, the train pulled in at Baker Street. I stood up, opened the carriage door, and waited for my friend, the lady viewer, to step out on the platform, but she didn't move. She was fast asleep!

[Contributed by Steve Ostler]

SURVIVING BRITISH PRE-WAR TV SETS IN THE UK

Robin Howells

The list that follows has been compiled over the last year and it's because I have been a keen collector for over 15 years that I have come to know quite a few other collectors, some of whom I contacted recently for the first time and I thank them all for helping me with this listing.

It will be noticed that quite a lot of well-known makes do not appear in my listing, including Alba, Bush, Decca, Dynatron, Ferguson, Ferranti, KB , Philco and Philips.

It is a pity that, as thorough as I have been, I was unable to trace any model of the makes named above and although some of them do exist somewhere either in this country or abroad, other makes will no doubt be no longer in existence. I dare say that there will be collectors out there who will have one of the above makes I've mentioned so it would be nice if they wrote in and told us about it.

- ❖ Editorial note: The anonymity of informants will be observed. Inevitably there are some sets in museums and in the hands of people who would not consider themselves collectors. The list does not include the modest numbers of sets in Belgium, Germany and the USA for instance (I have seen a Bush in the USA), whilst the Philips museum in the Netherlands has at least one pre-war UK-model Philips receiver. On that basis I would suspect the total number of sets surviving is around 200 to 250, which is not bad from a total production of perhaps 20,000. Well done to Robin for his diligence in compiling this list.

Make and model		Sets known to exist
Baird	T5	4
	T14	1
	T18	1
	T20	1
	T23	2
Cossor	54	3
	137T	1
	437T	1
	1210	5
Ekco	TA201	4
	Unidentified	1
GEC	BT 0070	1
	BT 3701	1
	BT 8090	1
HMV	900	6
	901	5
	902	9
	903	1
	904	7
	905	10

	907	7
	1850	1
Invicta	TL4	1
	TL5	1
Marconi	701	1
	702	7
	703	2
	704	1
	705	2
	706	5
	707	9
	709	6
	9" mirror-lid, model unknown	1
Murphy	A42V	3
	A56V	3
	A58V	2
Pye	815	2
	817	3
	819	1
	838	1
	843	1
RCA	TRK120	1
RGD	382RG	2
Truphonic	12" TV-radiogram	1
Ultra	T22	2
Total		131 sets

A FEW WORDS FROM OUR BOOK CRITIC

My recent foray into the environs of second-hand books produced a nice (£1.50) copy of a television 'history' by Robert Metz charting the rise of the famous NBC morning breakfast show, *The Today Show*. The book itself is mildly diverting, with pictures of the show's star, Dave Garroway and an odorous chimpanzee called J. Fred Muggs. It transpired that in order to boost the ratings, the great NBC under the leadership of General David Sarnoff resorted to the lowest of fairground ploys, viz. get the morons hooked with a freak show. Naturally, given the quality of US television at the time, the hook worked and the show (and chimp) went on to be a legend throughout the known world.

Unfortunately, later in 1953 during a sound-only relay of Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation, the cavorting chimp raised his arse to the camera just as HM was crowned. This chimp naughtiness, at the time, was hardly remarked upon (in the usual course of US televisual events, anything or anyone is fair game – all grist to the cornflake mill). However, back in Britain, news of the chimp's capers reached outraged ears. To quote from the book,

... a terrible uproar ensued in the House of Commons. Some said that the British were so appalled by the episode, and the commercialism that made it possible, that *television's arrival on the shores of jolly old England was delayed for several years.* (my italics)

The author of the above heinous inaccuracy probably meant the arrival of *commercial* television, but even there he's wrong. Planning for British commercial television was well underway by June of 1953; the act of parliament which introduced it was passed the following year. Hardly a chimp-inspired setback. Such is inaccurate television history. Later, of course (and this is a true TV fact), the British breakfast channel TV-AM echoed a chimp, with a rat.

Dicky Howett

VALUE ADDED?

Bruce Adams

Often when removing the back of a new televisual acquisition will be found an additional component – a CRT filament transformer. As is well known, these were fitted to save the cost of a tube replacement when the CRT developed a heater-cathode short or leakage. To maintain picture quality, these were expensively made compared to ordinary transformers as they had to have low-capacitance windings. They also had 'Boost' tappings whereby the CRT heater volts could be over-run by 10 or 20 per cent to improve picture brightness of an ageing tube.

Another method used before reactivation became popular was to add a resistor of say 5k from the main input, bypassing the rest of the heater chain to the CRT heater. This method was not considered to be good practice; however, it would have been a quick solution carried out by the cowboy element.

When dual-standard receivers were introduced, manufacturers favoured the use of a silicon diode in the heater circuit. This actually only dropped the 240 volts to 170 volts so a series resistor was still needed and in view of the reduced reliability that it brought about, it seemed to me that this was of dubious benefit apart from the ready available source of 'DC' for the transistors used in the signal circuits of hybrid receivers. We were assured by the set manufacturers that the heating effect of the pulsed DC was the same as AC but a voltage reading across a CRT having a heater rating of 6.3 volts would be approximately 4 volts.

On the first set that I had for repair using this arrangement, the CRT had a heater-cathode short circuit, so I fitted a transformer as usual. I noted though that with the heater voltage set for 6.3 volts the brightness had returned to being as good as that of a new CRT. By now heater-cathode shorts had become rare but with the increasing programme hours being transmitted, longevity became important, particularly with rental operators. Consequently, whenever a set came in for repair, I would fit a cheap filament transformer

since despite what the set makers said, the CRTs definitely preferred a proper AC heater supply. This method would often extend the practical life of a CRT for the two years or so before reactivation became necessary.

With the Mullard 90-degree range of CRTs, tapping the CRT neck about six times with a screwdriver handle would cause the outer oxide coating of the cathode to fall off, revealing a second layer that would then restore good brightness. This technique was also very beneficial with the later Mazda 110-degree tubes.

I hope that these notes have been of some interest to any newcomers to television servicing. Are there other service engineers who found out the transformer trick? Surely I am not alone!

A VERY COLOURFUL TIME

Dicky Howett returns to the heated days of early British colour television

In 1955, the BBC embarked on a series of live, experimental colour TV broadcasts from Studio A, Alexandra Palace. The BBC's research department at Kingswood Warren supplied an adapted-to-405-line NTSC American colour studio system built in conjunction with Marconis.

Initially, slides and films were transmitted after hours using the medium-power reserve transmitters at Alexandra Palace. Later, in November 1956, live-action shows beamed from the Channel 1 transmitter at Crystal Palace took place.

The intention was to mount a 'normal' colour TV service in order to assess the quality of the transmitted image. Selected homes in the area were equipped either with 405-line colour sets, or asked to log the compatibility, or otherwise, of the black and white image on standard black and white sets. The live colour programmes were produced by BBC director Michael Leeston-Smith and these included drama, talks, ballet, music (The Hot Colour Club) and light entertainment.

Labouring under the fierce colour lights in the cause of television science were (amongst others) Cy Grant, Janie Marden, Carole Carr, Sylvia Peters, a dance troupe called the TV Silhouettes and Phillip Harben who demonstrated cooking. Cookery was a tricky subject for the colour cameras, because it was discovered that food looks terribly unappetising if the colours are wrong. Fillet steak and cabbage proved a difficult test although, apparently, cheese photographed well.

In all cases these little programmes were mounted to establish the quality and stability of the system. There was no intention to explore production techniques. As a consequence, the technicians retained an unprecedented

overriding control of programme content.

Technically, the minimum Studio A line-up comprised two Marconi cameras (RCA design) on pedestal mounts, each with four lenses (maximum aperture f4.5); one 16mm film or slide flying spot scanner; a 35mm Cintel film scanner; one simple vision mixing panel allowing cuts, mixes, fades and superimpositions from all channels; and three 21-inch colour monitors.

Of the cameras themselves, it was reported that in spite of their weight and length (6ft 6in.) they proved quite manoeuvrable on their pedestals which had assisted elevation by means of hydraulic rams. The fixed (non-tilting) viewfinders gave the cameramen some trouble which limited the height of shots to the height of the cameramen. The lens turrets were very quick to swing and were reasonably silent. They gave consistent results working at an aperture of f5.6. However, the picture definition was poor due mainly to the many dimensional registration problems, both in the three-tube cameras and the three-gun shadowmask monitors. To overcome these problems all shots were framed 15-20 per cent closer than normal monochrome practice.

Matching of cameras was also a great problem. Colour response varied all the time. The valve-driven cameras suffered from overheating, with resultant loss of definition. They had to be allowed a few hours' cooling off time between rehearsals and transmission, (as no doubt did the performers). Other common faults occurred in colour registration, as well as shading (usually magenta or green) microphony and dichroic filter reflections within the cameras. To compound matters, the picture monitors (shadow mask type as well as a huge three-tube projection model) were very unstable at all times. It was also thought that panning and tilting the cameras through the Earth's magnetic field would mean constant re registration by test card. Fortunately, in practice this was not the case.

It was concluded in a report issued later that 'the BBC's 405-line NTSC system is undoubtedly capable of offering a most exciting improvement to present monochrome standards'. Even so, the report shrewdly suggested that before embarking on large scale colour television broadcasting the system would have to be capable of giving consistently improved horizontal and vertical definition, as well as even better colour.

In 1957, MPs at Westminster had the opportunity to view a half-hour light entertainment colour show. Six 21-inch colour sets and four black and white receivers were installed in Committee Room Number 4. Five of the colour sets were of a type designed by the BBC's Research Department. The sixth was supplied to special order. The four black and white receivers were standard commercial models. As reported in the *Daily Express*, the black and white pictures looked pretty glum. On the other hand, the colour pictures looked a bit too florid, like an over-dressed, over-painted woman. But the MPs were enthusiastic.

What did they see? Some "quite beautiful" close-ups of flowers and bees, butterflies and dancing girls. In the studio, Carole Carr sang *Smoke Gets In Your Eyes* against a changing background of harsh greens and blues. She

appeared later in an Edwardian get-up which showed off excellently a golden dress and vividly flowered hat. But Members must have reserved their opinions about making political appearances in television colour when they saw naturalist James Fisher and Dr W.E. Swinton showing off crystals and art objects. Here, the colour was at its worst, with the men's faces a plum shade and hands a deep salmon pink.

Up at Alexandra Palace, one of the cameras broke down for two hours. An official said: "We were all mucking in with soldering irons and a plan on the floor". Such is history.

But does anything visual survive of these experimental BBC colour broadcasts? Actually, yes, but not a lot. Apart from a brief sequence of Studio A filmed in colour for the otherwise black and white 1959 BBC documentary *This Is The BBC*, there are a few production stills, some taken by director Michael Leeston-Smith. His colour slides include shots of the performers and the 'teapot' caption which opened the tests every night. Leeston-Smith told the present writer that his colour programmes were actually tele-recorded by the research department for later assessment. Investigations have shown that nothing of Leeston-Smith's productions survive as specifically colour recordings, however there are some monochrome recordings of the 1957 demonstration programme to MPs. Also, there's some unique colour footage displayed recently at the National Film Theatre during a presentation recalling 30 years (from July 1967) of British colour television.

This colour footage includes scenes taken from the screen during a live test. Described as 'a television test transmission', the footage is dated as 1954 which historically is a shade too early. Assuming it's a BBC test, then it can't have been from Studio A at Alexandra Palace as live cameras weren't installed there until July 1956. The telerecording shows Leslie Mitchell in close-up interviewing two ladies. The picture quality is very poor displaying all the faults attributed to the three-tube colour system. It's conceivable that this 'test transmission' was a manufacturer's promotional test, or more likely, the film has been mis-dated.

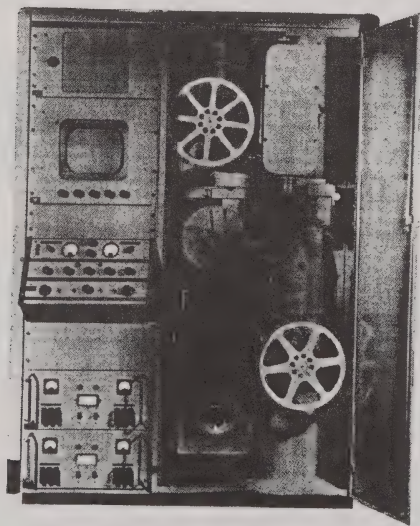
Later, the BBC colour experimental studio moved to Studio H at Lime Grove. During 1966, a cameraman called John Humphries shot on 8mm colour, a closed circuit production of *The Black and White Minstrel Show*. Despite many hours of colour trials in Studio H, the Humphries film is the only known record of colour television from that studio.

❖ *Illustrations on next page.*



A Marconi 3-tube colour camera in Studio A at AP in 1957.

A Cintel 16mm/slide scanner.



FROM THE INTERNET

WINKY-DINK

At <http://www.tvparty.com/requested2.html>, the following can be found under the heading "Winky Dink and You":

"Broadcast in glorious black and white beginning in 1953, this program featured the adventures of a cartoon lad named Winky-Dink and his dog Woofy, interspersed with the in-studio antics of a host and an audience of kids. The gimmick was that the boys and girls at home were asked to help Winky-Dink out of a jam by drawing a ladder or a rope on the TV screen. This was done with the aid of a Winky-Dink Kit which was sold by mail for fifty cents. 'We sold millions of those kits' the show's host Jack Barry commented, 'It was well thought out.'

"You could place the clear piece of plastic that came in the kit over the television screen and connect the dots to create a bridge for Winky-Dink to cross to safety, and trace the letters to read the secret messages broadcast towards the end of the show. Which I guess makes Winky-Dink the world's first interactive video game. Of course, it goes without saying that scores of kids without the kits drew on the television screen itself, ruining many a family's first television sets.

"Winky-Dink and You originally ran Saturday mornings at 10:00 am, from October 10, 1953 until April 27, 1957 on the CBS network. Along with host Jack Barry was Dayton Allen as Mr. Bungle, his assistant that never gets anything right. You may recognize the name 'Mr. Bungle' as the name of a very popular alternative band of the early nineties.

"In 1956, Jack Barry began hosting a wildly popular prime-time game show he also produced called *Twenty-One*, and Winky-Dink was cancelled the next year. Barry said at the time, 'It strictly didn't rate that well. It was on for almost four and a half years, but it never got the kind of audience the straight cartoon shows started pulling.' *Twenty-One*, on the other hand, was riding the crest of popularity that game shows were enjoying on the Fifties prime-time schedule.

"In the fall of 1958, *Twenty-One* (and almost every other game show) was driven off the air when it was revealed that \$129,000 winner Charles Van Doren was given some of the answers in advance. (The story was told in the movie *Quiz Show*.) Jack Barry, as host and producer of the show that broke the industry wide practice of prompting some contestants, took the brunt of the bad publicity. Because of the immense scandal that ensued, it was another ten years before Jack Barry worked on television again.

"In 1969, Winky-Dink was revived by Barry, this time as a five minute cartoon feature, complete with a new Winky-Dink kit for kids to send off for. Consumer groups argued that kids shouldn't be playing with their eyes so close to the TV set, and the character was quickly retired.

"Modern audiences will remember Jack Barry as the host of the long running CBS game show *The Joker's Wild*, a show he hosted from 1972 until his death in 1984. Barry also hosted a children's version of the *The Joker's Wild* called *Joker, Joker, Joker* from 1979 until 1981, bringing his career full circle."

Dead medium: The Fisher-Price Pixelvision

From: LangiG@parl.gc.ca (Greg Langille)

Source: "Film and Video Umbrella"

(<http://www.beyond2000.co.uk/umbrella/>); personal experience

A few years ago I purchased a Fisher-Price PXL 2000, a relatively cheap video camera that recorded on standard audio cassettes. I've found it very difficult to find information about it. Fisher-Price just says that "We can tell you that this product was introduced in 1988 and discontinued in 1989. There is no repair service or parts and we do not have any informational pamphlets available to send." So, it definitely is dead.

However, on the web site of "Film and Video Umbrella" (<http://www.beyond2000.co.uk/umbrella/>), a curatorial agency funded by the Arts Council of London, there is a good description of the technology, which is still in use by (primarily experimental) artists today:

"In 1987, U.S toy manufacturer Fisher-Price introduced the latest addition to their range of children's products: a lightweight plastic video camera, called the PXL 2000, which retailed at a cost of just under \$100 and recorded its endearingly rudimentary black-and-white images, at ultra-high speeds, on to a standard audio cassette. Loudly trumpeted as a kind of My First Movie Camera for the younger members of the video generation, it was confidently assumed that the PXL 2000 would go down a storm with legions of junior Spielberg wannabes, but instead, like many an apparently sure-fire success, it sank like the proverbial stone. Raised on the production values of MTV and Hollywood, America's vid-kids were less-than-captivated by what they could muster from the unmistakably low-tech (and none-too-durable) PXL. After only one year in production, Fisher-Price withdrew the camera from the shops and consigned it to the company bin.

"Since then, though, the PXL 2000 has enjoyed a remarkable, and quite unexpected, afterlife on the fringes of the U.S independent scene; adopted by an increasing number of film-makers and video-artists for its unique visual properties. As the last few years have shown, in the right hands and with surprisingly minimal fuss, this crude and clunky children's toy is capable of yielding some truly astonishing results.

"No matter how poor the light, the camera lends a distinctively hazy, dream-like quality to almost everything it shoots, accentuated by a ghostly optical shimmer when anything passes too quickly across the screen. Contrastingly, the simple fixed-focus lens lets one get uncannily close to people or objects, miraculously registering both detail and depth. Even more strikingly, the images produced reveal an extraordinary sense of intimacy and spontaneity, as

well as with a desire to experiment that is no doubt encouraged by the ridiculously small-scale costs.

"This Film and Video Umbrella touring package highlights a number of recent works by most of the leading figures in the still-expanding Pixelvision field (among them Michael Almereyda, Michael O'Reilly, Sadie Benning and Eric Saks) and gives British viewers their first real glimpse of the unabashedly low-definition but increasingly high-profile Pixelvision craze.

"Until now, PXL-generated work has been an almost exclusively American phenomenon, as none of the PXL 2000 cameras ever made it over to the U.K. British enthusiasts may be interested to hear, though, that while the Fisher-Price model has been long discontinued, its original inventor is set to retrieve the patent, opening the release for a new, improved version later this year."

So now it appears that Pixelvision may not be completely dead. I should mention that the camera I bought came with a small black and white monitor (about 3.5" screen) which the camera could be plugged into. This could be battery-powered (a modification done by the previous owner) and carried around – a precursor to the video screen on modern digital video cameras.

Unfortunately it died soon after I bought it. The camera itself is very light and uses six AA batteries and records both sound and audio. The tape is run at a very high speed (I think about six times normal cassette speed), so most of the audio includes a loud "whirr" from the camera itself. Also, mine needs a LOT of light ... basically direct sunlight only. But it works.

I should mention that I paid \$200 Canadian in 1994 to buy it from a guy who said he used it for skate board videos. It came with instructions from a hacker magazine for modifying the lens to use infrared light! For about \$20 you could actually get it to work as a night vision camera! There must be a whole subtopic of dead media concerning unintended uses.

(Moderator's remarks: the Pixelvision is a perennial collectors' darling, and if it somehow reappears in the mass market, it might make quite the investment opportunity the second time around.)

EARLY TV CALLS

Date: Sun, 26 Apr 1998 21:45:28 -0500 (CDT)

From: Richard Kunz <railbuff@Mcs.Net>

To: otr@broadcast.airwaves.com

Apparently the FCC at one point before, during (and perhaps after the war) had a notion that TV calls (and perhaps FM ones as well) should be differentiated from their AM cousins not by suffix (FM-TV) as they are today, but by a different combination of four letters.

For example, in the case of NBC, when the network's owned-and-operated stations were granted their regular licenses, the New York calls became WNBT, Cleveland WNBK, Chicago WNBQ, Washington (I think) WNBW, and Los Angeles KNBH. Eventually, they were all changed to reflect the basic calls of their AM sisters.

Far more murky is what happened in the case of CBS and ABC. The CBS o-and-o in New York signed on in 1941 as, I believe, WCBW. When Bill Paley

went on a buying spree after the war, he picked up KTSL in Los Angeles from Don Lee, and changed it to KNXT (now KCBS-TV).

Now, the questions:

1. Was there such an FCC call-letter-differentiation policy, and when did it disappear?
2. Was WABC-TV (Channel 7) in New York so named from sign-on day? (Or could it have been the first WJZ-TV?)
3. Were any of the other ABC o-and-o's (other than WBKB in Chicago) ever referred to by different call letters? (I know ABC bought KECA-TV in L.A. from the estate of Earle C. Anthony, but was it ever known as anything else.
4. With respect to the possible policy referred to above, did it apply in the case of such TV affiliates of AM stations like WOWT in Omaha, WLWT in Cincinnati or WMCT in Memphis?

Date: Tue, 28 Apr 1998 01:01:33 -0400 (EDT)

From: "A. Joseph Ross" <lawyer@world.std.com>

To: old.time.radio@broadcast.airwaves.com

Quite so. And General Electric's TV station in Schenectady became WRGB (and still are to this day), although co-owned and operated with WGY radio. On the old 40MHz FM band, the FCC had a special kind of call letters, consisting of a W or K, the channel number, and a letter indicating the location. So, for example, WBZ's FM station in Boston was W67B, meaning that it occupied FM channel 67 in Boston. The suffix system we know today was in effect by the time the present FM band was established and by the time Boston's first TV stations, WBZ-TV and WNAC-TV, came on the air in June 1948.

> 2. Was WABC-TV (Channel 7) in New York so named from sign-on day? (Or could it have been the first WJZ-TV?)

At the time, the CBS owner-operated radio station in New York was WABC. WEAf became WNBC and WABC became WCBS on the same day, I think sometime in the late 1940s. WJZ and WJZ-TV became WABC and WABC-TV in 1953. Then Westinghouse, as original owner of WJZ, got the call WJZ-TV assigned to their Baltimore television station.

Date: Tue, 5 May 1998 20:54:14 -0400

From: JeffM@sanctum.com (Jeff Miller)

To: old.time.radio@broadcast.airwaves.com

Just for the record, this restriction applied only to TV. On Nov. 1, 1943, when FM stations abandoned the alphanumeric calls (such as W47NY) and went to three- or four-letter calls, they were allowed the -FM suffix. I believe the date that TVs were allowed the -TV suffix was Nov. 1, 1946, which was the date WCBW changed to WCBS-TV.

<http://members.aol.com/jeff560/jeff.html> (broadcasting history)

UN-NAMED MENTOR

From: Diane@dbailey.cix.co.uk

Mention of the German system reminds me of the stories of a one time mentor of mine, who worked in the EMI laboratories when the first 405-line equipment was made.

He recalled that, due to dedicated people measuring the performance of every single component before use, the first prototypes worked perfectly, first time. Everything had been designed theoretically, then with the use of components exactly as specified, theory translated perfectly into practice. This was considered totally outstanding.

He helped install the demonstration sets for the side-by-side tests with the Baird equipment, and then went to Paris to install the EMI equipment for the French service. In Germany he saw how their television sets were installed in public places rather than made for private viewing. His French contacts told him, after the war, how the Germans televised their victory march up the Champs Elysées. One wonders how long the Germans maintained their television service during the war, when the UK service was shut at the outset.

During the war, along with most of his colleagues, he was switched to the Royal Radar Establishment at Malvern and its field stations, and survived, unlike many of his colleagues who died during airborne experiments.

THE WIRELIST

The Wirelist is an e-mail based discussion forum dedicated to discussions about radio broadcasting in the UK, with the emphasis on the nostalgic, the trivial and the esoteric; a quiet corner of the 'Net where, for example, the Golden Years of UK radio can be relived and those great comedy shows from the Light Entertainment department can be wistfully recalled (a nice cup of tea and a Swiss Cream are entirely optional!).

Wirelist is open to all comers and unmoderated. All postings will be archived for the benefit of new and existing subscribers alike so that in future we can look back and remember how good The Wirelist used to be in the old days! If you would like to join The Wirelist you will find details at the new Wirelist home page at

<http://www.mb21.easynet.co.uk/wirelist/>

CATHODIC TRIVIA

OK, all you filamentarian trivia phreaks, what's a:

- 1) monoscope
- 2) phasmajector
- 3) monotron

No, #2 has nothing to do with Viagra!

John Sehring

AE's response: All three were trade names for television still-picture generators, using camera tubes in which the pickup mosaic was replaced by a photographic image printed on a metal plate. RCA, DuMont and Baird all came up with similar devices in the mid-1930s but it would take very careful research to determine who 'invented' it first.

DuMont's Phasmajector was described in great detail in *Radio Craft* for April 1938; it was very crude. Baird's device used a proper half-tone photograph and was completed in August 1936. RCA first disclosed their monoscope in 1938 (RCA Review 1938, no. 2, page 414) and acknowledged a British patent number without saying whose it was. The principle is also discussed in the German periodical *Zeitschrift für technische Physik* 1935, no. 16, page 467, so it would be a brave man who claimed exclusive rights to the idea. If Baird (as I suspect) actually patented it, he was lucky to get away with it! Clearly RCA came late in the race and once again had to rely on foreign assistance, as they did with the iconoscope.

STRANGE BUT TRUE

NICAM trials and tribulations

One trick that Auntie played in the very early days of NICAM was to transmit BBC2's sound on BBC1's NICAM carrier, usually only during the daytime and for fairly short periods. Don't really know why, probably to check for crosstalk between the soundtracks. As most NICAM video recorders default to the NICAM sound if it is present, we received many complaints of "My video is picking up two channels at the same time".

Gary Broadbent, JVC Ltd

BBC's Crystal Palace Television Tower

An unusual test was made on the BBC's new 709ft tower on 20th November 1957. As part of an investigation into the aerodynamic behaviour of the tower and to check the theoretical design calculations a battery of ten rockets were mounted on the tower at a height of 625ft above ground level and fired in sequence at predetermined intervals by remote control. The rockets were not detached from the tower when fired, but held fixed, and each exerted a thrust of half a ton. The movement of the tower produced by the reaction was recorded on electronic equipment in a mobile laboratory on the ground. It was the first time that this form of test has been made on a high tower in this country, and it is hoped that the results will add considerably to present knowledge of the behaviour of structures of this type in steady winds of relatively light force. The BBC's main contractors for the Crystal Palace tower, British Insulated Callender's Construction Co Ltd, placed the test in charge of Dr. A. R. Flint who conducted it in collaboration with the National Physical Laboratory and the Royal Aircraft Establishment.

Electronic Engineering, January 1958

BEFORE YOU LIFT THE 'PHONE...

Please don't telephone to enquire about the state of your subscription or to seek technical advice, as this information is held in our separate Admin Office, to which all queries should be addressed by letter. Your cooperation in this will assist us to bring you your favourite magazines as quickly as possible.

Now you know... !

Thixendale is a rather dour looking hamlet in the East Riding which had the distinction of being unable to receive terrestrial television, because it's set in a valley that prevents line of sight to any transmitter.

Until only a couple or so Christmases ago, noone there had any television equipment; then some idiot off-comer decided to tell Murdoch, and Sky presented the local pub with a satellite system. Now all the poor so-and-sos are becoming hooked on the idiot's lantern.

Brian Hamilton Kelly, on the Internet

The Saint theme

According to the end credits for the current run of *The Saint* (colour) on Granada Plus, the original theme was composed by Leslie Charteris (creator of The Saint) no less! Apparently, the classic Saint melody (eight notes or thereabouts) was originally a tune that the Charteris family used to whistle in order to announce their presence when walking up to their in-the-middle-of-nowhere house.

Gareth Randall

Instant Replay

There was an amusing incident in the U.S. in the mid-1960s regarding instant replay; at a monthly meeting of NBC executives, held on a Wednesday, their engineering vice president told the head of NBC Sports that not only was slow motion playback not available, but that his engineers believed it to be impossible in theory.

That Saturday, ABC used a slow-motion instant replay for the first time on a college football telecast.

Ed Ellers, KD4AWQ

(see The Private Parts at <http://www.meldrum.co.uk/mhp-chat/>)

Dirty laundry

K-Mart is recalling talking children's T-shirts because of what they say out loud. The shirts show the television *Sesame Street* character Cookie Monster. When the child pushes a button on the front, Mr. Monster says, "Time to truck." But a K-Mart manager in Lakewood, Colo., confirms "truck" doesn't sound all that clear. "It definitely comes out with an 'f'," she says. The foul-mouthed shirt came to the attention of K-Mart after a complaint by angry parents who said their 19-month-old son picked up a "dirty word" from his T-shirt.

UPI

TELEVISION AGAIN NEXT SPRING

THE Hankey Committee's recommendation that television be restarted from Alexandra Palace on 405 lines as soon as possible has been accepted by the Government. Announcing this to the Commons on October 10, Mr. Herbert Morrison said that action was going ahead. BBC stated the same day that a vision test signal for the trade would be available before the end of the year. Application has been made for the necessary technical staff. The AP transmitter has been used for war purposes and needs considerable overhaul.

Next Spring should see the restart. Extension of the service will be directed by a Television Advisory Committee, which will be set up as recommended in the Hankey report. The BBC will continue FM experiments, and investigations on lower wavelengths, permitting higher definition, are being made. - *News item in Electrical and Radio Trading, November, 1945.*

PAGES FROM THE PAST

FRENCH TELEVISION: FOUR SYSTEMS IN USE

French television transmissions which are now taking place are conducted with four different systems! That of the Compagnie Française Thomson Houston has 455 lines and 25 complete pictures a second interlaced to give 50 frames. The mode of scanning, and the slope and timing of the sync pulses, are similar to those adopted in this country. Positive modulation is used and the DC component is retained.

The system of the Société Radio-Industrie has the same number of lines and frames, and the modulation is positive, and includes the DC component. The frame sync pulses are of somewhat different slope, however.

The Compagnie Française de Télévision use 450 lines and 50 interlaced frames. Negative modulation is used, and the mean carrier amplitude is maintained at a fixed value. Interlacing is secured by varying the timing of the sync pulses on successive lines.

The fourth system, that of the Société d'Applications Téléphoniques, uses 375 lines and 50 interlaced frames per second. Positive modulation with the retention of the DC component is used. The sync pulses are similar to those of other systems, but the duration of the line sync pulses is only 6 per cent of the line.

The transmissions carried out on January 13th, 14th and 15th will be by the system of the Compagnie Française de Télévision, and will take place from 4.15p.m. to 5.30p.m.

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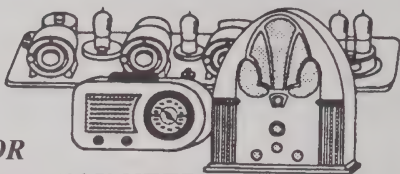
New television transmitters at Toulouse, Bordeaux, and Limoges are to be fed with programme material from Paris by means of a special underground co-axial cable which is being laid by French Post Office engineers. The use of the cable, the frequency response of which is maintained to 4 megacycles, is not confined to television; it is also suitable for multi-channel telephone and sound broadcast transmission.

Wireless World, 13th January 1938

In due course 405 Alive hoped to produce a special issue out of the main sequence embracing vast numbers of fascinating cuttings such as this one and taking a synoptic view of television development through the world in the period 1935-45.

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The Radiophile



Issue 38 - 1st Half, 1998 - Edited by: Peter H. Atkinson
 (peter.h.atkinson@btopenworld.com)

* Special Photo - A visit to the home of the late, great, and much-loved, Peter H. Atkinson

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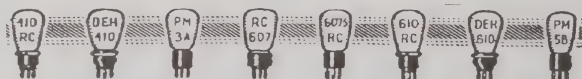
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THE TEST CARD CIRCLE

This society was founded in 1989 with fewer than twenty members. Since then it has grown in membership to well over one hundred, and has certainly grown in stature. The various broadcasting authorities acknowledge the wealth of information and expertise possessed by the membership, and regularly refer inquiries direct to the society.

All aspects of television trade test transmissions are included within the interests of The Circle: Test Cards and patterns, accompanying music, slides and still pictures, Service Information bulletins, Trade Test Colour Films, and, of course, the dear old BBC Demonstration Film.

A quarterly 48-page magazine is issued which contains lively and interesting articles on all of these topics. Each Spring, a convention is held in the little market town of Leominster, where members can meet for a delightful weekend of wonderful music and pictures, good companionship, and pure nostalgia. It is also a great deal of fun.

If you are interested in this fascinating subject, write to the Secretary, Curtons House, School Lane, Walpole St Peter, WISBECH, PE14 7PA, and if you send a 12.5" x 9" self addressed envelope with a 50 pence stamp, we will be pleased to send you a sample copy of the Circle's magazine.

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Test card music and old TV programmes are subject to the same rules of copyright as other recorded works and it is unlawful to *sell* amateur or professional recordings of same. Swapping same for no gain is possibly not illegal but *405 Alive* does not want to test the law on this subject so we will only accept advertisements from people who will indemnify us in this respect.

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If you are selling any electrical appliance without a plug on it, you are breaking the law. Domestic electrical appliances manufactured in or imported to the UK must be fitted with a correctly fused 13-amp plug. We suggest that our kind of antique treasures are labelled "Collector's item, not to be connected to the mains without examination by a competent electrician" or something similar.

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1. Whilst care is taken to establish the *bona fides* of advertisers, readers are strongly recommended to take their own precaution before parting with money in response to an advertisement. We do not accept any responsibility for dealings resulting from these advertisements, which are published in good faith. That said, we will endeavour to deal sympathetically and effectively with any difficulties but at our discretion. Fortunately we have had no problems yet. In related collecting fields, replicas and reproductions have proven to be difficult to identify, so beware of any items 'of doubtful origin' and assure yourself of the authenticity of anything you propose buying. And try to have fun; after all, it's only a hobby!

2. Much of the equipment offered for sale or exchange does not conform to present-day safety and electric standards. Some items may even be lethal in the hands of the inexperienced. This magazine takes no responsibility for these aspects and asks readers to take their own precautions.

STANDARDS CONVERTERS. Building your own is not a realistic proposition unless you already have seriously advanced design and construction facilities. It's not a task for amateurs, not even for gifted ones. Many of the parts needed are available only from professional sources and not in one-off quantities, whilst some previous designs for converters can no longer be copied because the custom chips are no

longer made. Unfortunately the production of these marvellous devices has now ceased. Note also David Looser's advertisement in this section for a conversion service.

MODULATORS. Two designs for modulators have been published in *Television* magazine but we don't recommend either today. One uses hard-to-find components, whilst the other one is good but requires you to make your own printed circuit board and wind your own coils very accurately. The good news is that you can buy an excellent ready-built modulators from Dinosaur Designs (see ad in this section).

COMPONENTS. Here is a brief list of suppliers; you can have a much extended two-page list by asking for FAQ SHEET 3 and sending one first-class stamp loose plus a SAE to the editorial address. Most valves and other components are not hard to find: we can mention Billington Export (01403-784961, £50 minimum order), Colomor Ltd (01403-786559), Kenzen (0121-446 4346), Wilson Valves (01484-654650, 420774), Sound Systems of Suffolk (01473-721493) and PM Components (01474-560521). A good non-commercial supplier of hard-to-find types is Phil Taylor, 3 Silver Lane, Billingshurst, Sussex, RH14 0RP. For hard-to-find transistors we have heard of – but phone numbers may have changed – AQL Technology (01252-341711), The Semiconductor Archives (0181-691 7908), Vectis Components Ltd. (01705-669885) and Universal Semiconductor Devices Ltd. (01494- 791289). NB: Several of these firms have minimum order levels of between £10 and £20. For American books on old radio and TV, also all manner of spares, try Antique Radio Supply, (phone 00 1-602-820 5411 , fax 00 1-602 820 4643). Their mail order service is first-class and they have a beautiful free colour catalogue (or is it color catalog?). Would you like to recommend other firms? If you think a firm gives good service please tell us all!

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The following firms are also noted, and don't forget the annual volumes TV & Radio Servicing at the public library.

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Alton Bowman, 4172 East Avenue, Canadagua, NY 14424-9564, USA. Schematics for all USA radio, TV, organ, etc. equipment 1920-1970.

Mauritron Technical Services, 47a High Street, Chinnor, Oxon., OX9 4DJ (01844-351694, fax 01844-352554). Photocopies of old service sheets, other technical data.

Savoy Hill Publications, 50 Meddon Street, Bideford, Devon, EX39 2EQ (01237-424280). Large library of service data for photocopying.

Technical Information Services, 76 Church Street, Larkhall, Lanarks., ML9 1HF (01698-883344/888343, fax 01698-884825), 'World's largest selection of manuals, 1930s to current date, British and foreign'.

In addition, 405 Aliver Bernard Mothersill has offered to photocopy (at cost) items from his own extensive collection of service sheets for 1950s and 60s TV sets. There are dozens and dozens, mainly Alba, Ekco, Bush, Ferguson/Thorn, GEC,

Murphy, Perdio, Pilot, also a few Decca, Defiant, HMV, KB, McMichael, Peto Scott, Philco, Regentone and Ultra. Write with international reply coupon plus unstamped self-addressed envelope to him at 3 Cherrywood Close, Clonsilla, Dublin 15, Eire.

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4. Put yourself in the position of the reader. Is all the information included?

NOTE: Thanks to referrals and mentions in the press we are now receiving a fair proportion of advertisements of sets for sale from members of the public. We print their descriptions in good faith but their descriptions may not be as accurate or as well-informed as those made by, say, a keen and knowledgeable enthusiast.

A PLEA! When sending in your advertisement please do put a date on it. We don't normally type in your advertisement on the day received and instead all small ads go into a file ready for typing later. But what happens then if I come across three undated ads all from the same person and one of them says 'This is my new ad, please cancel previous ones'? It does happen, so please be kind enough to date your ad.

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Attributed to John Ruskin, 1819-1900.

REPAIRS

"We do three kinds of job – quick, cheap and good. You can have any two of the three. You can have a good, quick job but it won't be cheap. You can have a good, cheap job but it won't be quick. And you could ask us to do a quick, cheap job but it wouldn't be any good."

Adapted from a repair shop sign in Canada, reported in The Guardian and submitted by Mark Brailsford.

A high-quality Band I **MODULATOR** is available and a **TEST CARD GENERATOR** for 405 or 625-line use. For more information send SAE and mention which products you are interested in. Dave Grant, Dinosaur Designs, 4 Kemble Drive, BROMLEY, Kent, BR2 8PZ.

STANDARDS CONVERSION SERVICE: I will convert your 625-line tapes to broadcast-standard 405 lines on my digital line-store standards converter. Free of charge to subscribers of *405 Alive*. Please send blank tape (VHS only) for output and return postage. Input tapes can be accepted on Philips 1700, EIAJ, Video2000, Beta or VHS. David Looser, Maristow, Holbrook Road, Harkstead, IPSWICH, Suffolk, IP9 1BP. Phone 01473-328649. *(Publisher's note: David's offer is a most generous one and users may care to send him a free-will donation towards his not insubstantial construction costs as well. There may be a delay in handling conversions if many people take up his offer.)*

REPAIRS to 405-line televisions and radios. For details or advice phone Camber TV & Video Centre, 01797-225457 (daytime). East Sussex (T).

REPAIRS: vintage TVs, radios and testgear repaired and restored. Personal attention to every job and moderate prices. Estimates without obligation – deal with an enthusiast! (BVWS and BATC member) Please include SAE with all enquiries – thanks. Dave Higginson, 28 High Street, Misterton, Doncaster, Yorks., DN10 4BU. (T). Tel: 01427-890768.

FOR SALE: 1957 Bush TV63 (wood cabinet version of TV62). 13-channel set through Bands I & III. Cabinet is in good condition (NO WORM); top may require a little restoration. All valves are present and the CRT intact, but there a couple of knobs missing. This would make an ideal set for restoration. Price £40 or best offer. Please contact Tony Agar on Ferryhill 01740-650536. **BUYER MUST COLLECT.** *This advertisement is repeated since it had the wrong telephone number last time.*

FOR SALE: BASIC TELEVISION. Principles & Servicing. Bernard Grob. McGraw-Hill 1949. Technical book with lots of illustrations of US television in the 1940's. No d/w. £15. TECHNIQUES OF TELEVISION PRODUCTION. Rudy Bretz. McGraw-Hill. 1953. 1st ed. Swimming in tv production pictures/studios/cameras/ob vans/transmitters/you name it. No d/w. £15. TELEVISION: Programming & Production. Richard Hubbell. Revised edition 1953. Nice US illustrated book on tv. d/w. £10. TELEVISION PRODUCTION HANDBOOK. Herbert Zettl. 2nd ed 1968. This American book on tv is absolutely dripping with pictures of cameras, pedestals, lenses, microphones, vt machines. 541 pp. Virtually mint interior. No d/w. £12 IDEPENDENT TELEVISION ENGINEERING FOR COLOUR Pat Hawker 1970. Well illustrated ITA technical publication showing ITV colour tv development. Scarce. £10. SEE IT HAPPEN. Making of ITN. G.COX.. Fascinating account of the start of ITN. Illustrated. d/w. £5. THE TECHNIQUE OF TELEVISION PRODUCTION. Millerson. 1979. Illustrated. £5. ATV SHOW BOOK 1960. Lots of pictures of ATV shows! £5. GIRL FILM & TV ANNUAL No. 1. 1957. First issue of this attractive series. No. d/w. £3. All items in VGC. Postage minimum £1. Contact Dicky Howett, 01245-441811; e-mail Dicky.Howett@btinternet.com

FOR SALE: Bush TV22, complete and working when last used, stored in the dry for 20 years. Offers in region of £100. Tim Norman, Lydd, Kent 01797-367091 (NS).

FOR SALE: Akai VTR-700 Video Tape Recorder + B/W Camera + B/W monitor (can be mounted on camera with special bracket) + TV-tuner (for receiving tv-programs with an external antenna) + TV-converter + some tapes. This set of equipment is rather 'old' but not much used. I have an advert of a Dutch electronic magazine where it was advertised in, and if I'm not mistaking the year was 1974. I really don't know what to ask for it all, but we can work something out. If you are interested, send me an e-mail.
Frank Olijslagers, e-mail: fqao.kh@consunet.nl (NS)

FOR SALE: Decca 1000 projection television, with screen. Tony Colton, 9 Pineway, Bridgnorth, WV15 5DS; tel: 01746-761203 (NS).

FOR SALE: Ferrograph series 7 spares. Jiggered half-track stereo machine is off to meet its maker. Please phone Andy on 0161-303 8857, leave message on machine (north Cheshire).

FOR SALE: Thorn 3500-series, mint condition; NERA C30 projection TV. Leslie Hine, Cumbria (01229-582557).

FOR SALE: Pre-war CRTs, believed good but sold as seen. Emiscope Type "3/4"; Ediswan type "AH" (about 8" diameter); Cossor type "K.3241", also an ACR13 and a VCR97. Aerial Services, Tankerton, Kent (01227-262491) (NS).

FOR SALE: Gresham Lion PLUGE picture signal generator "made under licence to BBC design", front panel switchable 405/525/625, 3½" tall. Offers? Steve Woodgate (Wealden Sussex), 01323-849211 evenings and weekends (NS).

FOR SALE: Bush TV22, BBC-only, virtually perfect apart from two small holes drilled for magnifying lens (which is missing). Offers? Mr Brooks, Manchester 0161-445 5561 (evenings best) (NS).

FOR SALE: Various 1960s to 1980s colour and mono TVs, VCRs, audio equipment, speakers, tape recorders and radios. Also several unused (regun) 1970s colour CRTs and many panels, knobs, parts, etc. Phone for a list or with your specific "wants". Dave Hazell. 01793-765390.

FREE TO GOOD HOME: Ferguson Courier dual-standard portable. Produces a raster on 405 and faint pictures on 625. Back is *not* missing, cabinet is not bad but has lost its volume knob. Collect free of charge from Godfrey Manning in Edgware; ring 0181-958 5113 evenings to arrange time.

FREE TO GOOD HOME: Philco 405-line table set PT64 (23"?). Good CRT, gives bright screen, VGC overall. Tandberg early 625-line 22" colour set (valves), beautiful teak cabinet. Nice sharp picture but sync fault. These two free to good home; also taking offers on a collectable JVC 19" colour set, early solid-state, rather boxy-looking, good picture, rotary tuner. Andrew Saunders 01487-824418 (Huntingdon area, NS).

FREE TO GOOD HOME: "HMF 15" (model unidentified) in 96cm (H) x 53cm (W) x 52cm double-door cabinet. Two home-built cabinet TVs based round ELAC tubes, one 10", the other 12". New(?), boxed Day Impex A6878 cathode ray tube, serial DIASS 82/1, replaces SF17170. Two portables (Binatone Portavision 01/9488 12": Ferguson Courier Model 3816 12") with accompanying circuit diagrams. Box of unsorted Mullard Unilex parts. P.O. issue multimeter model 12C/1, with leads, in original carrying case. Rapitest digital multimeter. 405-line TV signal generator (JV Radio Co. Plymouth). Ferguson Fieldfare 12v battery portable radio. Assorted electronic components. Please phone Mrs. Perry on 01495-220075 (Blackwood, Gwent, South Wales) (NS).

WANTED: LOPT for Bush TV148 (Rank A591 chassis). Steve Pendlebury, Bush House, 218 Belmont Road, Bolton, BL1 7AZ; tel: 01204-305781.

WANTED: Cathode Ray Tube type NEC 85JB4 for a 1978, JVC 3060 Mark II Radio/Cassette/TV unit. If anyone can help, please contact Tony Agar on Ferryhill (01740) 650536 with price and details. *This advertisement is repeated since it had the wrong telephone number last time.*

WANTED: Ikegami 79D camera parts. Especially needed, power leads, batteries. Sync, DTL and coder boards. Also, working surveillance unit for LDK5 camera. Contact Dicky Howett 01245-441811, e-mail: Dicky.Howett@btinternet.com

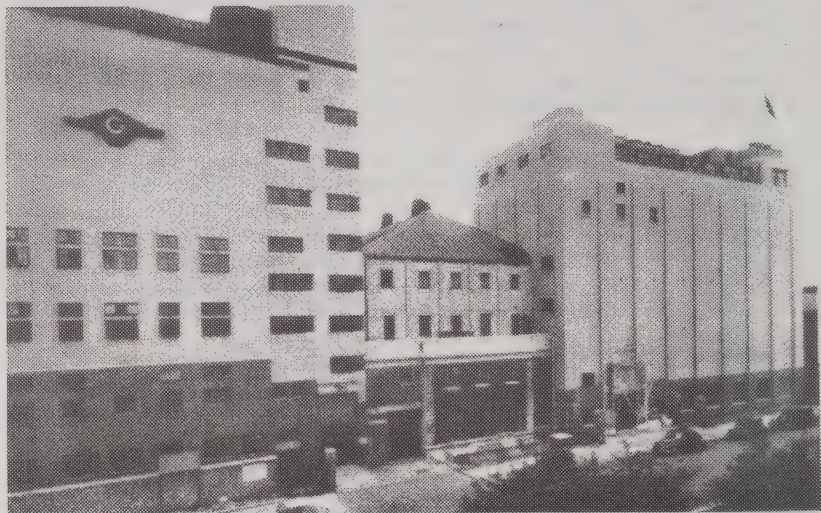
WANTED: I would like to acquire either a Ferguson 306T or 308T or a Bush TV75, two set types I remember from my early days "tinkering" with televisions. M.J. Fahy, 20 Maynard Road, Hemel Hempstead, Herts., HP2 4TR.

WANTED: Dinosaur 625/405 line standards converter, in good working order, Will pay up to £400 Please contact Bob Netherway, 28 Snowdown Road, Fishponds, Bristol, B516 2EJ, tel: 0117-939 0380 or 0421-378100 (mobile).

WANTED: Video heads for Philips N1500 and N1700 machines, also Sony CV-2000 video recorder. Leslie Hine, tel/fax 01229-582557.

WANTED: Murphy "Astra" series monochrome TV with VHF/FM radio (models V689, V683, V783 and V789 - circa 1961-2). Ferguson 22B5 colour TV (Thorn TX10 mark 3 "TX Professional", with separate speakers). Ferguson 3148 AM/FM transistor radio. Ferguson 3020 record player and the associated SA102 add-on stereo amplifier/speaker unit. Knobs for Pye FenMan II radio. Original service manual for Sharp VC9300H VHS VCR and Ultra 1984c mono TV. Most 625/UHF convertible early 1960s TVs (or just the conversion kits). Murphy B585 portable AM/FM transistor radio. Murphy "Service News" bulletins. Sinclair "Black Watch". Heathkit MMIU multimeter (or meter movement only). Dave Hazell. 01793-765390.

VINTAGE AUDIO RESTORATION SERVICE: Your vintage recordings digitally restored and transferred to CD or cassette, from all formats, including 78's. Prices from £4. Telephone David Lane on (01302) 321066, or write to 33 Beckett Road, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN2 4AD, for further details.



The old Gainsborough Films studio just after being taken over by BBC Television, with the Gainsborough logo still plainly visible on the main building to the left of the picture. Gainsborough was the most prolific of British studios, pouring out a series of popular films ranging from comedies to thrillers to costume dramas. During World War Two its massive reinforced concrete construction made it virtually bomb-proof and its personnel could use it as an air-raid shelter at night. Sadly, what Hitler could not manage to do the demolition gangs did after the BBC moved out, leaving only fond memories of the Gainsborough lady who introduced all the film productions and of those early television programmes when decent middle-class values still stood for something in a society not yet cheapened and coarsened by permissiveness.

HOW TO GET YOUR NAME IN *405 ALIVE*

The chief glory of every people arises from its authors.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Letters are always welcome and nearly all of them (unless marked *Not For Publication*) get published. Lengthy screeds may be edited for clarity. Electronic mail is also welcome. Address this to midshires@cix.co.uk

Advertising rates. Classified: free. Display ads, using your artwork: £5 per half page, £10 full page. Charges must be pre-paid.

Notes & Queries (for publication in the magazine). Keep them coming... and your answers to them.

Enquiries requiring an individual reply. These are answered when time permits. You **must** include a stamped addressed envelope **and** preferably also your telephone number (in case it is quicker to telephone a reply). Please be patient – thanks.

Articles are also most welcome. We get so many good ones that publication can take sometimes up to a year or so, but don't let that deter you. They can sometimes be held back when we group two or three together when they support a common 'theme'.

Payment. We're not a commercial magazine so sadly we cannot pay for material. On the other hand, full-length feature articles do earn the author a place in immortality so that's an incentive. You retain copyright of your article so you are free to offer it – probably in a revised version – to other, mainstream periodicals to earn some money. At least one of our contributors does this very successfully.

But I can't write like the big names do! Don't worry. We can sort out your grammar and spelling. It's the facts and your ideas that count.

How to submit material. If at all possible, please TYPE your contributions using a dark, black ribbon. This enables them to be read straight into the word-processor by a document scanner. Magic! Contributions on 3.5" PC computer disk are also welcome and your disk will be returned. Please process your words in some popular word-processing format, ideally as an ASCII file. If in doubt please ring first on 07000-405625 – thanks. You can also fax your letters, ads and articles on 01604-821647.

BACK NUMBERS

Some recent back issues are available from the Staffordshire address; send SAE with enquiries. In a few cases the editor can lend originals for photocopying.

FAQ FILES

FAQs are frequently asked questions, so we are keeping three files of FAQs and their answers ready for printing out on request for readers. These files will be updated as new information comes in. The files are already quite lengthy and contain material already published, so it would not be fair on established subscribers to reprint them in the magazine. FAQfile 1 runs to 57 pages and covers general points about old TV and how to get old television sets working again. FAQfile 2 is a reprint on all the articles on test card music and ITV station ident themes; it covers 15 pages. FAQ file 1 costs £3.00 and file 2 costs £1.00 (both post paid). These prices cover just the cost of copying and postage

plus the horrendous cost of banking your cheque (68 pence!). FAQfile 3 covers suppliers of hard-to-find electronic components and service data; for this one send one first class stamp and a SAE. (Available from 71 Falcutt Way, Northampton, NN2 8PH; cheques payable to Andrew Emmerson.)

WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR OWN COPY OF 405 ALIVE?

Perhaps you are reading a friend's copy – now you can't wait to receive your own copy four times a year. Send a cheque for £16 (inland and BFPO) or a Eurocheque or sterling banker's draft for £20 (all other territories) **made out to The Radiophile**, which will pay for a year's subscription (four issues). We regret credit card transactions can no longer be handled. Send money to 'Larkhill', Newport Road, Woodseaves, Stafford, ST20 ONP, not to Northampton.

ENQUIRIES REGARDING SUBSCRIPTIONS

Please write, marking your letter for the attention of the Admin. Office, The Radiophile, 'Larkhill', Newport Road, Woodseaves, Stafford, ST20 ONP. We regret we can no longer handle telephone calls. Please *do not* ring the Northampton (01604) number either regarding subscriptions since all business details are now handled from Staffordshire.

EXCHANGE PUBLICATIONS

You may wish to contact the following allied interest groups and publications (please send SAE with all enquiries).

BRITISH VINTAGE WIRELESS SOCIETY: Gerald Wells, Vintage Wireless Museum, 23 Rosendale Road, London, SE21 8DS.

BRITISH AMATEUR TELEVISION CLUB: Dave Lawton GOANO, Grenehurst, Pinewood Road, High Wycombe, Bucks., HP12 4DD.

NARROW BANDWIDTH TV ASSOCIATION: Doug Pitt, 1 Burnwood Drive, Wollaton, Nottingham, NG8 2DJ.

TEST CARD CIRCLE (TV trade test transmissions and test card music): Curtons House, School Lane, Walpole St Peter, Wisbech, PE14 7PA.

BBC TEST CARD CLUB, Keith Hamer, 7 Epping Close, Derby, DE3 4HR.

SAVERS OF TELEVISION AND RADIO SHOWS (S.T.A.R.S.), 96 Meadvale Road, Ealing, London, W5 1NR.

ANTIQUÉ RADIO, Mose' Edizioni, Via Bosco 4, 31010 Maser (TV) Italy - Tel. 00 39 423-950385; Fax 00 39 423-529049; e-mail: mose@tv.shineline.it

ANTIQUÉ RADIO CLASSIFIED, P.O. Box 802-A12, Carlisle, MA 01741, USA.

IRISH VINTAGE RADIO & SOUND SOCIETY: Henry Moore, 9 Auburn Close, Killiney, Co. Dublin.

RADIO BYGONES (vintage radio technology): Geoff Arnold, 9 Wetherby Close, Broadstone, Dorset, BH18 8JB.

THE RADIOPHILE (vintage radio): Chas. E. Miller, 'Larkhill', Newport Road, Woodseaves, Stafford, ST20 ONP.

TELERADIO NEWS (current radio and TV transmitter news, long-distance reception): Keith Hamer, 7 Epping Close, Derby, DE3 4HR.

TUNE INTO YESTERDAY (Old-Time Radio Show Collectors Association): Membership secretary: John Wolstenholme, 56 Melbourne Avenue, Dronfield Woodhouse, Sheffield, S18 5YW.

VINTAGE RADIO PROGRAMME COLLECTORS CIRCLE, Roger Bickerton, 3 Park Edge, Harrogate, Yorks., HG2 8JU (01423-887452). Caters for collectors of spoken word and other radio broadcasts.

VINTAGE LIGHT MUSIC SOCIETY: now wound up following secretary's unfortunate death.

ROBERT FARNON SOCIETY (light music by all composers): David Ades, Stone Gables, Upton Lane, Seavington St. Michael, Ilminster, Somerset, TA19 0PZ.

MEMORY LANE (78rpm-era popular music): Ray Pallett, P.O. Box 1939, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, SS9 3UH.

IN TUNE INTERNATIONAL (music of the years 1935-1960): Colin Morgan, 12 Caer Gofaint, Groes, Denbigh, Clwyd, LL15 5YT.

LAUGH Magazine, 52 Pembury Avenue, Worcester Park, KT4 8BT. In-depth information for people who enjoy old and new TV and radio humour.

GROUP 9.5 (for the 9.5mm cine enthusiast), Ron Price, 4 Higher Mead, Lychpit, Basingstoke, Hants., RG24 8YL.

PROJECTED PICTURE TRUST (cinema history): Harold Brown, 2 Eleanor Gardens, Aylesbury, Bucks., HP21 7LT.

VINTAGE FILM CIRCLE (for collectors and all lovers of old films): Alex Woolliams, 11 Norton Road, Knowle, Bristol, BS4 2EZ.

Memory Lane

Memory Lane is a lively magazine specialising in music of the 1920s through to the 1950s. Although the emphasis is placed on British dance bands and vocalists of the 1930s and 1940s, Memory Lane also covers the American scene, jazz, big bands, personalities, music hall and variety artistes. Regular features on Al Bowlly - Britain's favourite vocalist.

Published quarterly and attractively printed and presented, each edition includes exclusive articles by our team of world-class writers and journalists plus Picture Pages, CD and Cassette reviews, Readers' Letters, discographical features and the advertisements that you will want to read.

A "must" for 78 RPM collectors.

A £1 coin will bring a sample copy and full details.

**Memory Lane, P O Box 1939, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 3UH,
England.**



RADIOPHILE SUMMER SALE

The dismal lack of a proper Summer so far prompts us to offer consolation in the shape of some special prices, effective until the end of August, 1998. Brighten up the rainy days with some sunny reading matter or shine up our bakelite cabinets with the best of all polishes!

Radiophile Back Numbers: any ten for just £25, post paid, saving up to £5 on the usual price.

Bake-O-Bryte: three tubes* for just £6.50, post paid, saving £1 on the usual price.

Don't delay, send today. Graham is waiting in the Admin Office to rush these special offers to you. Send your order and cheque (sorry, no credit cards) to him at the usual address, "Larkhill", Newport Road, Woodseaves, Stafford, ST20 0NP.

*Bake-O-Bryte will be sent unboxed to save weight.

A REMINDER

Please check your address label

Are all the details correct? If not, please let us know. Also, we would like to remind you that if the number 38 is printed on the right hand side, your subscription expires with this issue. If it has, why not use the handy renewal form below?

I wish to renew my **405 ALIVE** subscription and enclose a cheque / postal order for £16 / 20 (please delete as appropriate).

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Post Code.....

Telephone/fax No.....

Overseas subscriptions in Sterling, please. Sorry, no credit cards.



Marion Ryan

THE BACK PAGE

405 Alive (ISSN 0969-8884) is an autonomous magazine within the Radiophile group devoted to the study and preservation of old television technology and programming. It has no connection with, and is not subsidised by, any other organisation. Publication is four times per subscription period but not at set times.

Editorial policy. This magazine acts not only as a forum for research, the republication of archive material and as a monitor of current developments but also as a means for all interested in this field to keep in touch. Readers are encouraged to submit articles, photographs, notes and letters.

We print readers' addresses only when asked to. We are always happy to forward letters to other readers and contributors if postage is sent. The magazine is produced as a labour of love and all editorial work is carried out on a voluntary unpaid basis – sorry, it's only a hobby! Writers retain copyright and are encouraged to republish their articles in commercial publications.

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✉ IMPORTANT POSTAL INFORMATION ✉

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WOODSEAVES, STAFFORD, ST20 0NP, ENGLAND.